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**UNSETTLING HISTORIES FROM AN UNSETTLED PAST:  
(RE-)STORYING AS PERFORMANCE IN CANADA'S  
COLONIAL PRESENT**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Theatre and  
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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this work is original, except where due acknowledgement has been given in the text. This submission does not contain material that has been previously awarded or submitted for a degree at another university.

Alexandra Natasha Marchel  
November 2016

## ABSTRACT

In 2008, Stephen Harper, then Prime Minister of Canada, delivered an official apology for the Indian Residential School system (1883 to 1996). This was the first formal apology from a prime minister to the generations of Indigenous peoples who suffered and continue to be impacted by the traumatic legacies of this federal policy.

Little more than a year later, however, Harper announced to reporters at a G20 summit in Philadelphia that Canada has “no history of colonialism” (qtd. in Wherry).

The dissertation takes Harper’s claim of colonial denial as its theoretical springboard, asking: What does it mean for Canada to apologise for the residential school system, whilst simultaneously denying the country’s history of colonialism? Investigating this question through a performance studies analytic, I ultimately conclude that Harper’s 2009 statement is indicative of how national identity is constructed by the state; that is, through settler colonial performances of selective forgetting, which serve strategically to undermine Indigenous sovereignty.

The doctoral project unfolds thematically through analysing three principal events between 2008 and 2015: the War of 1812 commemorations; the ‘Idle No More’ protest movement; and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

I have identified two main tasks for this study. First, to query the dominant story/stories of Canada animated in the colonial present. Second, to investigate Indigenous interventions that destabilise mythologies of settler benevolence through a ‘re-storying’ of Canada; a term I use to denote counter-narratives and embodied practices unsettling the country’s past that are, by definition, separate from those stories that reify narratives of national innocence.

By exploring both official stories and re-stories through a performance studies framework, moored in a self-reflexive methodology informed by my fieldwork, the dissertation offers a critical investigation of Canada’s refusal to reckon with its uncomfortable histories in an age of ostensible reconciliation.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AHF	Aboriginal Healing Foundation
AANDC	Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
AFN	Assembly of First Nations
APTN	Aboriginal Peoples Television Network
BC	British Columbia
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CEP	Common Experience Payment
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada / Indigenous and Northern Affairs
INM	Idle No More
IAP	Independent Assessment Process
IRS	Indian Residential School(s)
IRSSA	Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
RCAP	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission / Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America



## **REFERENCING**

While I have endeavoured to follow the referencing guidelines provided in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Modern Language Association handbook, three notes must be made regarding my choice of formatting. When a parenthetical reference includes an author's last name but is not followed by page numbers, this indicates that the material is unpaginated. When citing an author who has various sources referenced throughout the dissertation, I include in the bracket an abbreviated title of the consulted material. In parentheses that bring together multiple sources by different authors, the last names of the individual author and the year of publication of the referenced material is separated by a semi-colon.

It is also worth mentioning that this study is written in so-called 'British English,' except when directly quoting from sources written in American, Canadian, or any other forms of English. 'Canadian English' has been influenced by both British and American English, as well as containing its own distinctive elements; I can only hope that the reader will forgive any inconsistencies.

## TERMINOLOGY

Any discussion of Indigenous issues requires an exposition of the author's use of terminology. Throughout this study, I employ the following general terms: 'Indian' (when applied in legal instruments and policies); 'Aboriginal' (when referring to concepts related to Canadian law); and more commonly, 'Indigenous peoples' (to refer to the original inhabitants of what is now called 'Canada'). I will explain these and other terms below, as well as outlining the larger historical and legal contexts that have shaped this evolving terminology.

**Indian:** Although considered by many as a pejorative term, 'Indian' is a legal term that continues to be applied by the Government of Canada. The word is used in colonial federal policy and legislation, for example the 'Indian Act' and the 'Indian Residential School system.' Enacted in 1876, the Indian Act has undergone several revisions since it was first introduced. The Indian Act is a complex body of laws defining who and who does not qualify as a 'Status Indian,' in accordance with criteria outlined in the Act. Critically, Indigenous nations are the only peoples in Canada that have separate federal legislation regulating their affairs. As a centralised policy, the Act defines the legal relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Government of Canada, regulating Indigenous peoples in matters of their "lives, lands, and finances from the cradle to the grave" (Regan, *Unsettling* 97). Today, the statute is administered by the federal department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAC).<sup>1</sup> The Department of Indian Affairs, formally titled the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), more commonly referred to as Indian and Northern Affairs in Canada

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<sup>1</sup> The history of this department reaches back to before Confederation when there was an Indian Department for British North America, established in 1755 and administered by the British Imperial Parliament. Many Indigenous peoples still refer to the department as 'Indian Affairs,' as a way of signalling that it remains an imposition enforcing "colonial, dictatorial control" over their everyday lives (Erasmus and Sanders 9).

(INAC), was officially established in 1966. The federal department was renamed in 2011 as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). In 2015, the Government of Canada changed the name of the ministry to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, reverting to its former acronym (INAC). Throughout the dissertation I employ the name of the department as it was constituted during the year or period in question.

**Status Indian:** Having met the criteria of this classification as outlined in the Indian Act, ‘Status Indians’ are subject to federal jurisdiction. They are entitled to certain federal services, benefits, and programs. Without this recognition, they do not have the same access to programs and services as others who are classified as such under the Indian Act. A Status Indian is placed on the Indian Register, issued a band number, and given a status card. Historically, Inuit and Métis peoples were not recognised as Status Indians under the Indian Act. As explained below, this changed only recently, as a result of a Supreme Court ruling in 2016; they still do not have full Indian Status, however. Although Inuit and Métis are grouped together under the label of ‘Aboriginals’ in the 1982 Constitution Act, giving them constitutionally protected legal rights, their status is defined separately from the grouping of Indians under the Indian Act. This restriction of who is legally recognised as a Status Indian, argues Pamela Palmater (Mi’kmaq), serves “to ensure [Indigenous] extinction over time” (“Genocide” 38). In limiting who is legally defined as Indian, the state asserts its dominance over Indigenous peoples, whilst limiting its own treaty responsibilities.

**Non-Status Indian:** ‘Non-Status Indian’ is used to describe individuals who may self-identify as Indigenous, but who are not registered as Indian under the Indian Act. This lack of recognition may be for a variety of reasons, including

if their parents or ancestors enfranchised. Under the Indian Act, enfranchisement (1857-1985) was a process by which an individual or bands, either voluntarily or under mandatory provisions, had links to their communities severed. In return, the federal government promised full citizenship, initially British and later Canadian. Enfranchisement was based on the assumption that Indigenous peoples were willing to surrender their legal and ancestral identity in order to assimilate into Canadian society. This term can also apply to Indigenous women who lost their status before 1985; if an Indigenous woman married a non-Indian or Métis man, she was deprived of her status and forced to leave her reserve. The compulsory enfranchisement provisions were rescinded in 1922, restored in 1933, and finally repealed in 1951, but voluntary enfranchisement remained part of the Indian Act until 1985.

**Inuit:** There are many different cultures and peoples in the Arctic and Subarctic regions of Canada; much of these lands belong to Inuit peoples. ‘Inuit Nunangat’ is the official term used by the national Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami organisation to describe the homeland of Inuit peoples, which includes 53 communities spread across the geographic region. Inuit Nunangat spans four regions: Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador), Nunavik (Arctic Quebec), the province of Nunavut and Inuvialuit (the north-western part of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon North Slope). Throughout the twentieth century, Inuit status was in a state of flux. For years, Canada resisted federal responsibility for Inuit peoples. This issue was eventually referred to the Supreme Court in the case of *Re: Eskimo*. In 1939, the court issued a judgment ruling that Inuit peoples are Indians under the meaning of section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867. In an attempt to avoid the same level of jurisdictional provision that the federal government was

obliged to give Status Indians, the Indian Act was amended in 1951, specifically to exclude Inuit peoples from the legislation (Bonesteel). Today, there are various forms of self-government structures in Inuit Nunangat. This includes the creation in 1999 of Canada's newest territory, Nunavut. Nunavut has a public government serving both Inuit (85 per cent of the population) and non-Inuit peoples, and is therefore not an 'ethnic' form of self-government. The arrangement in Nunavut is a form of Inuit self-government; this is not formal, however, but "premised upon the existence of an Inuit majority" (Wherrett 12).

It is important to mention that there are other Indigenous communities not subject, in part or in whole, to the Indian Act. This delegation of jurisdiction stems from a host of circumstances, including court cases, negotiations, self-government agreements, and modern treaties. As of 2016, "Canada had recognized 24 self-governing Aboriginal communities and 617 'Indian Act' First Nations" and "[o]f these, 241 'Section 10 First Nations' now govern their own membership, having opted out of the Act's Indian status provisions" (Gover 288).

**Métis:** Métis peoples belong to a unique and distinct cultural group, who share a "[c]ommon culture, kinship, and politics" (Barker, "(Re-)Ordering" 62). They are commonly defined as "[p]eople of mixed First Nation and European ancestry" (INAC, "Terminology"). The question of who can claim to be Métis is subject to ongoing debate, which takes place both in the courts and in non-judicial settings. Frequently applied are the criteria set out in the *Powley* test. Stemming from the Supreme Court decision in *Regina v. Powley* (2003), it was adopted by the Métis National Council, an organisation that summarises membership as follows: "'Métis' means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is

distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation” (qtd. in Andersen 118).

A number of Métis scholars have taken issues with both definitions. Chris Andersen argues that the dominant classification based on “mixedness and hybridity” (5) as the defining element of Métis identity is not only overly simplistic, but is based on a racialised logic (6), which positions Métis as “inauthentic” or “less Indigenous” (7) in comparison to other Indigenous groups. It also implies that other Indigenous peoples never married outside of their communities, and that any person who can trace an Indigenous ancestor is Métis (Gaudry 2013; Vowel, “Settlers”). For Andersen, anyone claiming to be Métis must be able to trace a historical “prior presence” (20) based on “pre-existing webs of kinship” (13) to the nineteenth century fur traders and Indigenous women of the Red River settlement, roughly in the area of what is now Winnipeg, Manitoba, the “national core” of Métis peoples (5-6). Some regard Andersen’s focus on the Red River Métis as exclusionary, in that it denies recognition to those who self-identity as Métis, but are not descended from the Red River settlement (Bidwell 2014).

Under the Indian Act, Métis peoples are not recognised as Status Indians, and therefore are without the same rights that are afforded to Status Indians. Since *Daniels v. Canada* (2013), however, Métis, as well as non-Status Indians, are now recognised as Indian under Section 91(24) of the Constitution Act 1867. However they still do not fall under the Indian Act.

**Bands:** Defined in and regulated by the Indian Act, ‘bands’ are an administrative unit of government. According to scholar Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawà:ke Mohawk), this state-created system fragmented Indigenous nations,

disrupted traditional governance, and has led to Indigenous political disempowerment and dependency on the federal government (*Peace* 70).

**Reserves:** Status Indians are entitled to live on ‘reserves,’ tracts of land governed under terms outlined in the Indian Act. Reserves are not private property; they are set aside by the Crown for the exclusive use and benefit of an Indian Band. Today, the term ‘First Nation territory’ is also used. Historically, reserves were established to clear valuable land for settlement. They were also “designed to serve as a social laboratory where Natives would be indoctrinated with European religious cultural, linguistic and agricultural practices” (Gittings 197), and where colonial bureaucrats would monitor the movement of Indigenous peoples. Today, reserves are widely regarded by many Indigenous peoples as their ancestral and spiritual homelands, and “places for extended family and kinship supports” (Vowel, “Move”). Many of the more than 3,100 reserves across Canada are isolated and remote, with high poverty rates, poor infrastructure, and minimal resources.

**Native:** ‘Native’ is a non-specific and antiquated term no longer regularly employed when speaking about Indigenous peoples in the context of Canada. It is more often used in the United States, as in ‘Native American.’

**First Nations:** ‘First Nations’ is now generally used instead of ‘Indian’ in common parlance, and includes both Status and Non-Status Indians.

**Aboriginal:** ‘Aboriginal’ is defined in Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982. It is a collective and legal term recognising three distinct groups of Aboriginal peoples: Indians, Métis, and Inuit. Identifying as Aboriginal does not necessarily mean that an individual has Indian Status. Although some people may self-identify as Aboriginal, scholars Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel

(Cherokee Nation) contend that the term serves the needs of the federal government. They understand it to be intrinsically tethered to the discourse of “‘aboriginalism’” (598), which they argue is “‘purely a state construction that is instrumental to the state’s attempt to gradually subsume Indigenous existence into its own constitutional system and body politics’” (588). Instead, they advocate the term ‘Indigenous.’

**Indigenous:** ‘Indigenous’ is a general non-legal term. Although Indigenous is used internationally, there is no formal description. In 1986, however, the United Nations (UN) offered the following definition:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. (qtd. in Anaya 124n83)

Although I use this term frequently, I recognise that it is contested. For example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Māori) observes that “[t]he term ‘[I]ndigenous’ is problematic in that it appears to collectivize many distinct populations whose experiences under imperialism have been vastly different” (6). Throughout this study, after introducing the name of an Indigenous individual I place in brackets the nation, cultural ancestry, treaty affiliation, and/or Indigenous-language terms of self-identification with which they self-identify. Unfortunately, this cannot always be entirely consistent. There were times when I was unable to locate this information having attempted to do so either through research, or by attempting to make direct contact with the person in question. In accordance with Smith, who argues that “‘within [I]ndigenous discourse the term ‘peoples’ has become an



important linguistic symbol of our identification as self-determining peoples” (115), I use the term ‘Indigenous peoples.’ I also refrain from using the phrase ‘Canada’s Indigenous peoples,’ given that it reproduces legitimising claims to settler sovereignty. Such small gestures can be seen as a means through which to destabilise the totalising colonial logic that ignores the heterogeneity of the more than 1.4 million people self-identifying as having “Aboriginal identity” (Statistics Canada 40), the over 60 distinct spoken Indigenous languages and dialects, and the more than 600 Indigenous communities living in what is now called ‘Canada.’

## INTRODUCTION

### Situating the Study in the Colonial Present

This doctoral project has been informed by many different encounters, but one in particular has shaped the trajectory of my research. Before outlining the specific questions addressed in this dissertation, I would like to recount a personal “archive story” (Burton 11) from my visit to the Archives of Ontario whilst conducting fieldwork in Canada in 2012. In doing so, I hope to illustrate how I have approached the investigations with which this study is concerned, and to provide the context for its larger theoretical grounding.

Upon arrival at the Archives of Ontario in August 2012, I visited a public exhibition in the Helen McClung Gallery. Entitled *Perceptions of 1812: Identity, Diversity, Memory*, the exhibition was held during the first few months of the Government of Canada’s nationwide bicentennial of the War of 1812, in which this previously forgotten three-year land and naval conflict between the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) and its dependencies, including modern-day Canada, was presented as a national memory. As I made my way through the exhibition, I looked at historic maps, centuries-old books enclosed in glass cases, and paintings in gold leaf gilded frames of selected heroes from the battles; I also read dozens of panels with information documenting what were, according to the exhibition’s curators, “the fascinating stories of how the War of 1812 and its aftermath shaped the character of Ontario and the nation” (Archives of Ontario, “Perceptions”). Having passed through the exhibition, I went to collect the materials on the Indian Residential School (IRS) system that I had ordered.

Reading through the documents, I came across a pamphlet published in 1972, entitled *We Live at School*. Its authors are listed as “the pupils of

Grades, 3 & 4, St. Anne's Residential School, Fort Albany via Moosonee, Ontario; Irene Czulinski, teacher." Written in English, the pamphlet contains poems, maps, and brief accounts of the children's experiences at this institution in remote Northern Ontario. Divided into sections purportedly authored by "The Boys" and "The Girls," the pages detail such matters as the location of where they were fed and their daily assigned chores and responsibilities, with references to recreational activities such as fishing, ice skating, and watching films. Included in the text are numerous statements extolling the virtues of a good work ethic, for instance "[w]e like to do hard work because we get better in school" (Czulinski). A passing mention is given to the strict rules that the Indigenous children were made to follow. More cn, however, are seemingly mundane passages like the following description of the curriculum at St. Anne's:

We learned many things in school. We learned about volcanoes and magma and igneous rocks. We learned about dinosaurs. We learned about geese and goose bands. We sent a letter to the United States and they sent a letter back to us. They sent some little books about goose bands. We do lots of arithmetic and reading and languages and A-B-C order. (Ibid.)

The pamphlet's preface states: "We wrote 'We Live at School' so that other children that do not live in school will know what it is like" (Ibid.), and thus it appears to be some form of advertisement. What is not revealed, however, is that it was at this specific institution, run by the Roman Catholic diocese and operating as a residential school from 1904 to 1976, that some of the worst incidences of abuse were committed within the IRS system

(Metatawabin and Shimo 2015). This became public knowledge in 1996 following the investigative work of *Globe and Mail* journalist Peter Moon, who disclosed cases of:

[R]ape, illegal abortions, sexual fondling, forced masturbation and many kinds of physical violence, including whipping bare buttocks with a wire strap and using a home-made electric chair into which children were strapped and given jolts as punishments. The complainants told the police that as children they were forced to eat their own vomit and kneel in painful positions for hours on concrete floors, were locked up overnight in unlit basements and were subjected to humiliations such as having to stand with their underpants over their heads if the pants had fecal stains on them. (qtd. in Evans 75)<sup>2</sup>

As numerous scholars, Indigenous organisations, and official bodies have documented over several decades, these may be seen as extreme acts of violence, but experience of such cruelty was not atypical for the estimated 150,000 Indigenous children taken from their families and placed into residential schools throughout Canada, where the government's "*aggressive assimilation*" policy (Chansonneuve 39; italics in original) of 'civilising' Indigenous children was practiced. The term 'schools' is arguably a misnomer, as the curriculum placed more emphasis on religious indoctrination than on

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<sup>2</sup> St. Anne's returned to the national headlines in 2000, following the filing of civil claims made by its former students for reparations in relation to the egregious harms they experienced. But it was not until 2013 that hearings commenced. The 60 claimants and their legal counsel submitted requests to gain access to thousands of records in possession of the Government of Canada; including transcripts from the five-year provincial police investigation in the 1990s that brought to light evidence of the horrific abuse committed at St. Anne's. In 2014, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ordered Ottawa to turn-over its documents. Canada eventually complied, but the papers submitted were heavily redacted. In 2015, the claimants returned to court to request the release of un-censored transcripts. Until these are produced, many survivors cannot provide adequate enough evidence for their individual claims (Barrera, "Survivors"; Galloway, "Judge"; TRC, *Honouring* 27).

education. The highly regimented mandate of the institutions was primarily to prepare Indigenous boys for manual labour in agriculture, and to train Indigenous girls for domestic work; the aim was not to educate, but to assimilate. This was clearly articulated in 1887 when Prime Minister John A. Macdonald announced in the Parliament of Canada that the legislation was “to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion [Canada], as speedily as they are fit for the change” (qtd. in Miller, *Skyscrapers* 253).

This was carried out through the separation of Indigenous children from their families and communities into institutions often far away from their reserves, so as to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of cultural values. Christianity was enforced and English (and to a lesser extent French) imposed, with children punished, often brutally, for speaking Indigenous languages and practicing ancestral traditions. In some documented cases, sewing needles were pushed through the tongues of Indigenous children as punishment (Haig-Brown 16). Upon arrival at the schools, children were assigned a number and their long hair and braids - a carrier and symbol of Indigenous spirituality (Grant 1996) - was cut or entirely shaved off. Their names were replaced with Christian ones, their clothing confiscated - sometimes burned - and replaced with a standard school uniform (TRC, *What* 2015).

Children as young as four years old were removed from their homes and taken to the schools, with some remaining until they reached 18 years of age. In 1920, the Indian Act (1867) was amended so as to make attendance for Indigenous children compulsory.<sup>3</sup> Indian Agents and the Royal Canadian

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<sup>3</sup> See the Terminology section for information on the Indian Act.

Mounted Police were given the authority to remove children from their homes; parents faced imprisonment if they refused to comply. Some children never saw their parents again or never returned to their home communities.

Communication with parents was limited, and letters from students to their families were often censored or even re-written by staff (Sellars 68). Many parents would not know until years later that their children “were transferred from an IRS to a different school, hospital, foster home, adoptive home or any other form of institutional care” (TRC, *Missing* 3). Authorities often not only failed to inform parents that a child of theirs had passed away at a residential school (for example, as a result of ill-health, abuse, negligence, or dying from exposure whilst attempting to run away from school), but also failed adequately to record their deaths and their place of burial; sometimes this information was destroyed altogether by Indian Affairs and Health Canada (Barrera, “Harper”). According to some estimates, over 6,000 children died in the IRS system, and there are unmarked and unidentified graves across the country (Puxley). There are children buried in the grounds of some institutions, many of which “had cemeteries but no playground” (Rabson, “Truth”).

Although the IRS policy officially dates from 1892 to 1969, its roots reach back to the seventeenth century, whilst its operation in Canada extended well into the late twentieth century. The initial prototypes were created by missionaries in New France; in 1620 a seminary for Indigenous children was established near Quebec City by the Récollets, an order of the Franciscans, but it failed to recruit students (TRC, *They* 5). This was followed in 1639 with boarding schools set up by the Ursuline Sisters along the St. Lawrence River.

Further models were built in New Brunswick in the late eighteenth century, and in Ontario in the mid-nineteenth century (Miller, *Reflections* 194; *Shingwauk's* 39-60).

It was not until 1883, however, that the residential school system became state policy, developed and refined by the Government of Canada. This it did over the next several decades; in 1892, the state formalised official funding for the policy. At the system's peak, in the 1930s, there were, officially, 80 institutions in operation simultaneously. It was only in the late 1960s that they began to be phased out by the federal government, after it took over their operation. Until 1969, the residential schools were run as a church-state partnership, with schools established before 1883 operating as "a series of individual church-led initiatives to which the federal government provided grants" (TRC, *They* 6). Though it was the Government of Canada that was "the senior partner", the children in the schools "were, in more cases, in the immediate care of the churches" (Milloy xiii).

The rationale behind state-supervised and church-run residential schools was first outlined in the 1879 *Davin Report*, written after Macdonald's Conservative government sent politician Nicholas Flood Davin to the US to investigate if its new model of an industrial boarding school system for Native American Indians established in 1869, which according to state officials were "achieving 'excellent' results' a decade later" (Furniss, *Victims* 25), would be feasible in Canada.<sup>4</sup> Impressed with the industrial boarding schools as a means to 'civilise' Indigenous peoples, Davin returned to Canada and wrote his *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds* (1879). The federal

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<sup>4</sup> See Andrew Woolford (2015) for a study documenting both the Indigenous boarding school system in the United States and the IRS system in Canada.

government embraced his findings and authorised the creation of schools for Indigenous children, beginning in the Canadian West (TRC, *They* 6-10). It was only in the mid-1990s that the last federally-administered institutions, and the system itself, closed down entirely.<sup>5</sup>

Over more than a century of existence of the IRS system, Indigenous children endured malnutrition and were housed in overcrowded buildings with inadequate heating and poor ventilation and insanitary conditions, all of which contributed to rampant pandemics and a high death toll. Concerns were raised in 1907 by Dr Peter Bryce, then Chief Medical Officer at the Department of Indian Affairs, who released a report stating that in the previous 15 years, 24 per cent of students attending the institutions had died, mostly from tuberculosis (Waldrum et al. 167). Though some basic health standards were introduced as a result of Bryce's findings, there was no significant process of reform; in 1913, Duncan Campbell Scott, then the Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs (1913-1932), lamented that "fifty per cent of the children who passed through these schools did not live to benefit from the education which they had received therein" (qtd. in TRC, *They* 29). While the government attempted to "limit [Bryce's] influence", including by dismissing him from his federal service position, in 1922 he published a pamphlet entitled *The Story of a National Crime: Being an Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada* (Woolford, *Benevolent* 238). But the IRS system would continue to operate, and expand, for many more decades, the story of Canada's 'national crime' disavowed from the national imaginary.

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<sup>5</sup> There is no consensus in the literature regarding the exact timeframe. For example, historian John Milloy (1999) uses the date range of 1879 to 1986, while George Erasmus (2004), then the President of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, offers the larger timeframe of 1831 to 1998. The reason being has to do with the precise definition of a 'residential school'; a matter that is discussed in Chapter 3.



In 2015, almost a century after the publication of Bryce's pamphlet, the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)<sup>6</sup> declared that these institutions were sites of psychological, epistemological, cultural, spiritual, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, with profoundly destructive effects on Indigenous peoples, communities, families, and nations. The policy itself, the Commission concluded, was one of "cultural genocide" (TRC, *Honouring 1*).<sup>7</sup> As the Commission explains:

For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as 'cultural genocide.' (Ibid.)

Established in 2008 and beginning its work in 2010 before completing its report in 2015, the Commission officially documented, in private and public

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<sup>6</sup> The original title was 'The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission.' In 2009, it was changed to 'Truth and Reconciliation Canada,' using the abbreviation TRC, "done so that the web address could be shortened to trc.ca and work in both official languages" (Curry, "Reconciliation"). Ronald Niezen observes that the French title was also altered; "in 2010, the French version went from 'Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada,' with a switch in the keywords *vérité* (truth) to *témoignage* (testimony), then back again in 2011 to the original version" (83). Niezen suggests that this change was not "to privilege testimony over truth", but that like the modification of the English version, "*témoignage* was preferred in part because it made for a more uniform acronym" (Ibid.).

<sup>7</sup> Before the TRC reached this conclusion, the application of the word 'genocide,' a term formulated by Raphael Lemkin (1944), was in common usage in Indigenous scholarship in Canada and the US documenting the residential/boarding school policy, particularly starting in the 1990s (Chrisjohn and Young 1997; Churchill 1997). Andrew Woolford (2009; 2015) rejects the separation between physical and cultural genocide, however, arguing that this implies that what took place was less destructive than a physical genocide; for an opposing view, see MacDonald (2007). Others apply the term outside of the IRS system. Jennifer Huseman and Damien Short (2012) describe the current tar sands project in Alberta, as a "slow industrial genocide", as the ability for Indigenous nations living in the Treaty 8 area "to hunt, trap and fish has been severely curtailed" (216). For a recent study theorising colonial settler states as inherently genocidal, see Woolford et al. (2014).

forums, thousands of statements from survivors, families, communities, and some former staff affected by the IRS system. In giving their testimonies, survivors like Garnet Angecone (Lac Seul First Nation) felt able to state that “[t]he walls of silence have come down” surrounding this history (qtd. in *CBC News*, “Residential School Survivor”).<sup>8</sup>

Although the TRC focused some national and international attention on the IRS system, it was in the 1980s and 1990s that there was first a marked rise in public - and crucially, non-Indigenous - awareness of the issue within Canada. It was during this period that a number of survivors came forward with high-profile allegations of physical and sexual abuse, which they documented in mass litigation claims filed against the federal government. Responding to these charges, the then department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada issued a *Statement of Reconciliation* in 1998.<sup>9</sup> Delivered at a lunchtime ceremony in Ottawa, the *Statement* was not, however, part of the permanent parliamentary record. A cautiously-worded document, it attempted to limit Canada’s scope of acknowledgement of the IRS system to “*profound regret*” (J. Stewart; italics in original). As Jeff Corntassel and Cindy Holder point out, the *Statement* confined its recognition of the harm committed at the schools “to those who suffered the ‘tragedy of sexual and physical abuse at residential schools’” (473). Not only did it fail to account for the intergenerational effects of the schools, but “apparently the residential school

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<sup>8</sup> In 2007, the TRC commissioned the Missing Children Working Group to investigate students who died, or went missing at the schools, and to find out the causes of deaths, and the locations, and conditions, of burial sites; its findings are published in Vol. 4 of its *Final Report*, see *Missing Children* (2015).

<sup>9</sup> In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the churches involved in the IRS system offered apologies to residential school survivors. However, the Roman Catholic Church, which in the nineteenth century operated approximately 60 per cent of the schools, did not offer an apology. Instead, in 2009 Pope Benedict XVI gave an “expression of regret” (qtd. in Monchalin 136).

policy itself or other cultural, political, social, economic, and psychological impacts did not warrant an apology” (Ibid.).

It was not until 10 years later, on 11 June 2008, that Canada’s then Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, delivered before the Parliament of Canada - where in the nineteenth century Prime Minister Macdonald had articulated the state’s assimilative rationale for the policy - a formal and officially-recorded state apology for the IRS system. In an effort to highlight the importance of the occasion, all working parliamentary business was cancelled on this day (*CBC News*, “I’m Just”). Hundreds of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples gathered on Parliament Hill to witness the apology via large mounted television screens, while residential school survivors and their families sat in the public galleries of the House of Commons. The broadcast was shown on television, webcast, and radio. It was screened in various settings, including hotels, living rooms, high school gymnasiums, friendship centres, band council offices, and in university classrooms. Inside the House of Commons, the most visible presence of Indigenous bodies was provided by the 11 guests of honour, who witnessed the apology in its entirety from the centre of the chamber’s floor. The delegation included residential school survivors and leaders of national Indigenous organisations (Assembly of First Nations, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, the Native Women’s Association of Canada, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council). The seating for the guests, arranged in a circle, was positioned in front of the bench from which Harper stood and delivered his statement; symbolic and actual victims of this federal policy sitting alongside a successor to its architects.

As the official proceedings commenced, Harper rose and read from his prepared statement, which he delivered in English and in French:

I stand before you today to offer an apology to former students of Indian residential schools. The treatment of children in these schools is a sad chapter in our history. [...]

Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country. [...]

The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden is properly ours as a government, and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail.

You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time, and in a very real sense we are now joining you on this journey. The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

We are sorry. (Government of Canada, “House”)<sup>10</sup>

While later in the Introduction I offer an analysis of the text of the apology, I want to introduce here how it fits more broadly within the context of this study. Over a year after delivering this official statement, Harper was speaking at a news conference on 29 September 2009 at the G20 Pittsburgh Summit in Pennsylvania, taking place in a year that also happened to be the United Nations’ International Year of Reconciliation (Henderson and Wakeham, “Introduction” 1). Responding to a question from a reporter about

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<sup>10</sup> For footage of the apology, see <http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2382719738>; accessed 1 October 2016.

Canada's economic position within the G20, the Prime Minister responded with a meandering answer during which he recited "well-worn nationalist mythologies regarding Canada's distinctive status as a middle power" (Ibid.). In describing what he believed to be the country's "broader assets", he declared that Canada has "no history of colonialism", and that Canada has "all of the things that many people admire about the great powers, but none of the things that threaten or bother them about the great powers" (qtd. in Wherry); a statement that appeared to undermine the central premise of his earlier apology, and raised questions about its sincerity.

In contrast to the 2008 apology, which had generated extensive national and international headlines for weeks both preceding and following it, coverage of Harper's G20 Summit remarks was scant, infuriating many Indigenous peoples. Representatives from the Prime Minister's Office contended that his comments were taken out of context, claiming that Harper's statement "*was in response to a question from Reuters about Canada's voice and role in the international financial market*" (qtd. in Ibid.; italics in original). This may have been the context of the original question, but Harper had chosen to use it as an opportunity to offer his version of Canada's cultural and political history. Not only did his remarks at the G20 summit omit hundreds of years of Indigenous resistance against settlers, it also perpetuated the myth of discovery and *terra nullius* (empty lands). This was illustrated when the Prime Minister described Canada's history as "beginning with our two major cultures", namely the Anglo-British and the French (qtd. in Ibid.; italics in original). Shawn A-in-chut Atleo (Nuu-chah-nulth Nation), then the

Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN),<sup>11</sup> responded by declaring that this was “simply not good enough” (qtd. in Hui). In a written letter, Atleo referenced Harper’s 2008 apology, quoting the Prime Minister’s words that “[t]here is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential School system to ever prevail again” (qtd. in Ibid.). Atleo sought to stress to the Prime Minister that “[t]he effects of colonialism remain today” (qtd. in Ibid). Without acknowledging this violent history, Atleo argued, a “clear path to reconciliation” cannot be pursued in Canada (qtd. in Ibid.).

### **Nature of the Project**

The dissertation takes Stephen Harper’s claim made in Pittsburgh as its theoretical springboard to ask: What does it mean for Canada to apologise for the residential school system, whilst simultaneously denying the country’s history of colonialism? From this question, others arise, such as: What was at stake in Harper’s dislocating of this federal policy from the colonial structures that allowed it to be implemented and sustained for so many years? What do the former prime minister’s remarks, as well as the fact that it received so little outcry, tell us about the ways in which Canada publicly relates to its past? To what extent does colonial amnesia shape how Canada stories its sense of self both to itself and to international audiences? And what does this, as a national narrative, do?

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<sup>11</sup> Although the AFN is not a federal department, it receives the bulk of its funding from the Government of Canada. The AFN is a national advocacy organisation (composed of First Nation bands, elected chiefs, and council members) representing Indigenous peoples in Canada.

This study maintains that Harper's claim that Canada has "no history of colonialism" (qtd. in Wherry) warrants extensive critical scrutiny. Though it may have been given in an offhand manner to reporters at the G20 summit, the remark is particularly significant because of its lack of ambiguity. Ultimately, I argue that it is both consistent with and indicative of a deep-rooted and discursive practice of the state. That is, Canadian national identity is actively constructed through settler colonial performances of selective forgetting, serving to undermine Indigenous sovereignty. As the doctoral project demonstrates, we can see its manifestations in various forms, for example in official state speeches; in cultural celebrations of Canadian history and identity; it finds concrete form in state-sanctioned monuments; it is visible in federal policies and laws, especially pronounced in those concerning land and natural resources; and circulates in the everyday through media discourses. This in turn raises difficult and urgent questions regarding the issue of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

The years 2008-2015 constitute the timeframe for this study. Although, broadly speaking, the project coincides with Stephen Harper's premiership (2006-2015),<sup>12</sup> my investigation reaches well beyond documenting the politics of his Conservative federal government. The principal rationale behind this timeframe is that it was during this period that Canada witnessed particularly highly-energised, diffuse, contested, and colliding debates driven not only by government officials, but also artists, activists, scholars, and the general public

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<sup>12</sup> Under the leadership of Stephen Harper, the Conservative Party formed successive Canadian governments between 2006 and 2015. Harper formed two minority governments in 2006 and 2008, and then a majority government in 2011. After almost a decade in power, he was defeated in the October 2015 federal election, after losing to Justin Trudeau (the son of Pierre Elliott Trudeau who was Liberal Prime Minister from 1968-1979 and 1980-1984) of the centre-left Liberal Party. In the three-way race between the Conservatives, New Democrat Party, and the Liberals, the latter gained 39% of the popular vote, winning a decisive majority.

about how national memory, history, and identity is to be publicly storied. One of my key findings is that there were two core stories “confront[ing] each other in the public sphere” (Rothberg 2) at this time. One celebrated a unified and reconciled harmonious Canada, whereas the other attempted to compel Canada to face its obfuscation of the country’s colonial histories. I contend that this comes into view through the case studies chosen for analysis. The dissertation unfolds thematically through a detailed reading of three recent major public events that took place across Canada during these years: the War of 1812 bicentennial (2012), an Indigenous-led protest movement called ‘Idle No More’ (INM) (2012-2013), and the TRC (2008-2015).

There are two overarching goals for this study. The first is to query the official story/stories of Canada animated and staged in the colonial present. In theorising this concept, I turn in part to the work of geographer Derek Gregory. He develops this phrase as a method to map out “the constellations of power, knowledge, and geography”, involved in a process he sees as taking place in the form of an active verb (xv). Gregory’s focus is on exploring how the colonial past is “routinely reaffirmed and reactivated in the colonial present” (7) in the context of the British and American ‘war on terror.’ He does this through investigating the colonial realities in Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. In the Canadian context, the phrase ‘colonial present’ is reformulated by Dene scholar Glen Coulthard as the “settler-colonial present” (15); a concept that was elaborated upon by Lorenzo Veracini in his work entitled *The Settler Colonial Present* (2015). Both of these latter scholars situate the pervasive drive of settler states in expropriating Indigenous lands



and natural resources through the theoretical optic of the settler colonial present. I use the term ‘colonial present’ and ‘settler colonial present’ interchangeably, however, as I consider the colonial present in Canada to be inherently settler colonial.

The second key aim of the dissertation is to explore Indigenous interventions that destabilise mythologies of settler benevolence through a ‘re-storying’ of Canada. These are counter-narratives and embodied practices unsettling the country’s past that are, by definition, separate from those stories that reify narratives of national innocence. My understanding of the concept of storying is informed in part by the work of South African writer, scholar, and theatre and performance director, Mark Fleishman.<sup>13</sup> He explains:

While a story is a particular category or form of artistic or cultural expression defined by a set of stylistic conventions or norms, storying is the process of ‘making and doing’ with stories, which involves, variously but not only, composition, construction, playing, performance, listening, watching and responding. (198)

While Fleishman writes that “[s]torying allows possibilities for participants to reflect their own concerns and agendas, concerns and agendas that often run counter to dominant narratives” (Ibid.), my conceptualisation of the term applies the prefix ‘re-’ to ‘storying.’ I contend that analysing both re-stories and the process of re-storying opens up enriching possibilities not only to discuss stories as performance, but as performatives; in the sense Homi Bhabha speaks of, in that they disrupt hegemonic constructions of ‘the nation’ (1990).

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<sup>13</sup> Fleishman is a co-founder and co-artistic director of Magnet Theatre located based in Cape Town.

The dissertation provides the first investigation excavating the historical genealogies between the War of 1812 bicentennial, the INM movement, and the TRC. These are three major recent “performance event[s]”, that is “noteworthy happening[s]” (Madison and Hamera xii), in Canadian history hitherto yet to be brought together in a single study. I analyse the “eventness” of these performance events, which Corina Shoef suggests as a concept that “focuses on what it is that makes an event become one” (357). Secondly, the doctoral project interrogates the pernicious workings and dynamics of settler colonialism through a performance studies praxis.

Performance theory is essential for the tasks at hand. As an analytic, it offers theoretical approaches better to comprehend the production and public dissemination of national stories, to understand their effects, and to unpack how the past is relationally and materially ordered. As a broader framework, my analysis turns to the definition of performance provided by scholar Elin Diamond. She explains that “performance describes certain embodied acts, in specific sites, witnessed by others (and/or the watching self)”, but that it is also “the thing done, the completed event framed in time and space and remembered, misremembered, interpreted, and passionately revisited across a pre-existing discursive field” (1).

I also explore performance as “a method of resistance, a form of criticism, a way of revealing agency” (Denzin, *Performance* 9). In making this argument, this study is informed by the work of Dwight Conquergood, who embraces “performance as kinesis” (57), shifting Victor Turner’s conception of performance as “cultural *invention* to intervention” (57; italics in original). Conquergood approaches performance “as *transgression*, that force which

crashes and breaks through sedimented meanings and normative traditions and plunges us back into the vortices of political struggles” (58; italics in original). The doctoral project demonstrates that performance theory engenders complex research tools to foreground Indigenous memories and histories that are too often disavowed in official formulations of Canadian national identity. In so doing, my study both describes and elucidates the existing tensions inherent in how and why reconciliation has become progressively framed and lauded by many as a political and social paradigm, even whilst Canada still refuses meaningfully to reckon with its unsettled past in the colonial present.

### **Imagining Canada**

I have taken an interdisciplinary approach to writing this dissertation. Drawing upon voluminous scholarship across the fields of theatre and performance, political science, memory, cultural, legal, and settler colonial studies, I am especially indebted to the work of such scholars as: Sara Ahmed (2004), Naomi Angel (2012), Adam Barker (2013), Julie Burelle (2014), Glen Coulthard (2014), Elizabeth Furniss (1999), Derek Gregory (2004), Milija Gluhovic (2013), Nadine Holdsworth (2010), Yvette Hutchison (2013), Eva Mackey (1999), Sherene Razack (2004; 2007; 2013), Paulette Regan (2010), Dylan Robinson (2014), Audra Simpson (2014; 2016), Diana Taylor (1997; 2003), and Leslie Thielen-Wilson (2012).

In this section, I highlight some of the scholarship that has guided my analysis in thinking about nations as dynamic, contested, fluid, and ongoing constructed public projects. I discuss this in relation to theatre and nation both

within and outside the setting of Canada. I then outline how my study employs the terms ‘narrative’ and ‘story.’

As described above, one of my key arguments is that amnesia concerning Canada as a colonising nation has publicly shaped and continues to shape official narrations of national identity. This idea - that forgetting is a key component to nation-building - was most famously articulated by French philosopher Ernest Renan in a speech delivered at the Sorbonne in 1882, in which he declared that “[f]orgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation” (qtd. in Bhabha 11). Renan continued by remarking that the illusion of national “[u]nity is always effected by means of brutality” (Ibid.). This process is a characteristic element not only in the everyday, but in public spectacles of state pageantry. In her study of Argentina’s ‘Dirty War’ (1976-1983), Diana Taylor argues that “[p]ublic spectacle is a locus and mechanism of communal identity through collective imaginings that constitute ‘nation’ as ‘an imagined political community’” (*Disappearing* ix). She explains that “public spectacle both builds and dismantles a sense of community and nation-ness”, “both forges and erases images of national and gender identity,” and “stirs and manipulates desire”, all the while concealing from its audiences the histories that threaten national cohesion (Ibid.). Forgetting is, therefore, as important as remembering in stories of national belonging, and amnesia is an active process. Self-repression of a nation’s atrocities, for which it may bear collective responsibility, is conditioned by the demands of the present. The example of Canada’s colonial present provides a case in point.

Investigating the ways in which performance was utilised during the ‘Dirty War,’ Taylor weaves in Benedict Anderson’s theories into her study (29, 31, 92) - specifically his notion of nations as “imagined communities”, produced through concurrent valorisations of perceived commonalities and the forgetting of incongruous elements posing as a threat to a community’s cohesion ([1983] 2006). Anderson writes that nations are “*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, [...] yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Ibid. 5; italics in original). His work has been criticised by some scholars, such as Himani Bannerji and Partha Chatterjee, for failing to address issues of colonial power relations. Bannerji argues that Anderson sidelines the issue of “*whose* imagination is advanced as the national imaginary”, and that in his analysis he “glosses over the divisiveness of class, ‘race,’ and ideology” that produce an imagined community (65; italics in original). Chatterjee takes issue with Anderson’s focus on the western world, observing that his model does not account for “anticolonial nationalism” (5). Still, Anderson’s contribution to thinking about the imaginative dimensions of how ‘the nation’ comes into being through shared cultural practices has become central to cultural theory, as well as to this doctoral project.

While Anderson focuses on the imagined quality of nations, citing the example of the rise of print technology’s responsibility for the mass reproduction of newspapers and the dissemination of books in vernacular languages, his work has been widely developed in theatre and performance studies. This is because, as Jen Harvie explains, Anderson’s theorisation “locates the lived, social effects of national change not just in the major acts of

nations' political institutions", but in the everyday, through "the various cultural activities and structures people engage in from reading newspapers, to shopping, to making or watching theatre performance" (4). Like Taylor, Harvie adds breadth and depth to Anderson's theory in her study *Staging the UK* (2005). In her analysis of British and Irish "dramatic texts and performance events" since the mid-1980s, Harvie sets out "to explore how thinking about performance can help us understand the workings of national identities but also the inverse: how thinking about national identities can help us understand the workings of performance" (5). Also making reference to Anderson's work is S. E. Wilmer, who in *Theatre, Society and the Nation: Staging American Identities* (2002) makes the argument that "theatre can serve as a microcosm of the national community, passing judgement on images of itself" (1-2). In the context of Canada, in Alan Filewod's *Performing Canada: The Nation Enacted in the Imagined Theatre* (2002) the author concludes "that Canadian theatre can as a whole be considered as a meta-performance that literally enacts the crisis of nationhood" (xvii). As the subtitle suggests, Filewod takes up the notion of 'the nation' as an imagined community to explore how theatre "transforms experience into a community narrative", and in so doing, "materially constructs in the audience that community it addresses in its texts" (Ibid.).

While the idea that a theatre audience automatically sees itself as a nation represented on the stage provides a compelling notion, it also must be queried. As Canadian scholar Erin Hurley points out in her text *National Performance: Representing Quebec from Expo 67 to Celine Dion* (2011), "[n]either 'nation' nor 'performance' allows for transparent reference between

the terms such that one might perfectly stand in for the other” (8). Moreover, although theatre can be a site of publicly re-appraising official narrations of national identity, as Helen Gilbert argues, scholars must be cautious in “idealising theatre’s capacity for subversion or imagining that it operates outside of the disciplinary apparatus of the state” (“Forward” viii).

Stories performed both in and outside of the medium of theatre can uphold the status quo, “used to put across a moral vision of the world in the interests of power and manipulation” (Phelps 9); but they can also rupture it. With this in mind, definitions of the terms ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ are necessary. While Norman Denzin explains that “[n]arrative is a telling, a performance event, the process of making or telling a story”, and that “[a] story is an account involving the narration of a series of events in a plotted sequence which unfolds in time” (“Forward” xi), like sociologist Francesca Polletta I use these two terms interchangeably (8). Narratives provide coherence. They are vehicles for individuals and communities to make sense of their worlds. As narrative scholar Molly Andrews points out, “[n]arratives provide a very rich basis from which to explore political identities,” further noting that “what an individual or a community choose to tell about themselves is intricately tied to how they construct their political identities” (11). This is consistent with political scientist Eric Selbin’s description of the cultural, social, and political work that stories do. Writing that “[s]tories essentially reflect the cultural values of their time and place as well as those who tell them”, they are “reservoirs of views and values, a way for people to know themselves and associate themselves with (or distinguish themselves from) others, and are reflective of the past, present, and future their culture

hold true” (25). In contemplating how the past is made and remade through national stories, the work of Stuart Hall is particularly helpful; specifically, his idea of “*the narrative of the nation*” as conveying “a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals which [...] give meaning to the nation” (293; italics in original).

In this study, I demonstrate that in Canada there is a fundamental disjuncture between how non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples relate to official formulations of national narratives. This observation is supported by scholars such as Kiera Ladner (Cree):

For Indigenous peoples, the story of Canada is one of myth, [legal] magic, deceit, occupation, and genocide. For Canadians, the story is one of discovery, lawful acquisition, and the establishment of peace, order, and good governance. These conflicting stories of Canadian history are representative of historical narratives of the colonized and the colonizer. But they are not just matters of historical perspective or concern: they define and frame how the colonized and colonizer explain the past, understand the present, and envisage the future.

(“Take” 279)

Bearing this in mind, I grapple with a series of questions: “Whose forgetting? Whose memory? Whose history?” (Roach 7) is represented in the narrative of the nation? But also: Who is entitled to speak? Who are the protagonists? In what larger political and social setting are these told? Who benefits from these stories? Who is the intended audience? Who is imagined as belonging in the national imaginary, under what conditions, and who is situated at its margins? In addition to describing certain omissions, I have set myself the task of



“asking why they exist” (Bociurkiw 12). I do so by drawing attention to the “political dramaturgy” of national narratives, discussing their macro and “micropolitics of power”, and “the ways normative values and institutionalized modes of production permeate personal relationships and individual desires” (Corrêa 308) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, through stories structured by the colonial present.

### **Research Methodology**

As I travelled to Canada during several field work trips in 2012-2013 - during which time I visited, and sometimes revisited, the cities of Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Saskatoon, and Vancouver - it would be Joseph Roach’s observation that “[t]he pursuit of performance does not require historians to abandon the archive, but it does encourage them to spend more time in the streets” (*Cities* xii) that would come to indelibly shape my research methodology. But so too would Diana Taylor’s typology between “the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones), and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual” (*Archive* 19; italics in original). In addition to gathering primary data from the Archives of Ontario, I also collected but did not end up explicitly incorporating into these pages, material I sourced from the Historical Collections Unit at the RCMP Heritage Centre in Regina, as well as the Anglican Church House Archives in Toronto. It was my visit to the Archives of Ontario, however, that became the departure point for the theoretical investigations of this study; illustrating how “material spaces of archives exert tremendous and largely unspoken influences on their users,

producing knowledge and insights which in turn impact the narratives they craft and the histories they write” (Burton 9-10). My study offers textual criticism and discourse analysis of such materials as: law statutes, transcripts of political speeches, press articles, maps, national monuments, state iconography, and federal government advertising (circulated online, on television, cinemas, in the form of pamphlets, leaflets, and distributed as paraphernalia). My project also weaves in and engages with a constellation of voices and embodied practices of cultural memory that emerged through my own data collection; thus highlighting how “[p]erformance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice” (Conquergood 33).

I made a concerted effort to spend ‘time in the streets,’ amassing original material that would afford generative ways to better understand, contextualise, and theorise lived Indigenous and non-Indigenous memories and histories within the context of an ostensible age of reconciliation. To this end, my project thus explores mixed qualitative methods of inquiry. I have embraced the “[t]he qualitative-researcher-as-bricoleur or a maker of quilts” role described by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (4). They write that the bricoleur “uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand” (Ibid.). Further elaborating that this involves “performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to intensive self-reflection and introspection”; to being engaged with “many interpretive paradigms”; to recognising “that research is an interactive process shaped by one’s personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity and those of the

people in the setting”; and to “stress[ing] the dialectical and hermeneutic nature of interdisciplinary inquiry, knowing that the boundaries between traditional disciplines no longer hold” (5).

With my notebook, consent forms, Dictaphone, video and photo camera on hand, I would take detailed notes of my observations of the various public events I attended throughout my fieldwork trips. I regularly recorded, with the consent of my informants, conversations that I initiated in such settings. Many of these took place as chance encounters, unfolding as informal interviews. There were times when I did not come prepared with structured interview questions; rather my intention was to offer open-ended questions that would steer informants into covering issues that were important to them, that they wished to focus on during our conversation. Throughout these encounters I found myself sharing Denzin’s methodological concern on the subject of interviewing:

I want to cultivate a method of patient listening, a reflexive method of looking, hearing, and asking that is dialogic and respectful. [...] As an active listener [...], I will treat dialogue as a process of discovery. [...]. I will use it as a method for uncovering structures of oppression in the life worlds of the persons I am interviewing. (*Performance* 75)

While some of my informants presented themselves as eager to converse with me, others were uncomfortable with being directly quoted, so I have deliberately not included these interviews in this project. Other times I conducted scheduled interviews with a range of people while I was back in the UK, corresponding with my interlocutors via email or over the phone.

It is worthy to note that my research is directly inspired by the work of Eva Mackey, who in her manuscript *House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (originally published in 1999) pursues “a ‘multi-site’ or ‘multi-locale’ ethnography”; an approach that highlights how “national identity is produced both in face-to-face encounters in multiple sites, and through representations, institutions, and policies” (19). Her framework in thinking about fieldwork as a form of inquiry, in putting fieldwork observations and primary source documents from the archive in dialogic conversation with secondary readings from multiple disciplines, influenced my own investigation into narrative/narratives of ‘the nation’ as an active process and a public doing.

However, throughout my fieldwork trips I would also repeatedly return to the scholarship of Paulette Regan. Her text *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (2010) urges non-Indigenous peoples to “work as Indigenous allies to ‘restory’ the dominant-culture version of history; that is, we must make decolonizing space for Indigenous history [...] as told by Indigenous peoples themselves” (6). Taking Regan’s words to heart, this study is grounded in an enterprise of critical ethnography, which as D. Soyini Madison writes, “begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular *lived domain*” (*Critical 5*; italics in original). My work commits to an ethical and moral stance in its investigations in uncovering subversive “acts of activism” (Madison 2010) disrupting the colonial present.

As outlined above, throughout the writing process of this dissertation I sought to foreground the ways in which “[e]mbodied and performed acts

generate, record, and transmit knowledge” (Taylor, *Archive* 21), thus revealing the archive as a public site of knowledge production. I found such disruptions staged during large and small Indigenous protests and marches, sometimes visibly mobilising thousands of people onto the streets, sometimes they would take place in protests of micro-resistance during events of state pageantry that I would inadvertently stumble upon. I would find them in the setting of theatre, through public testimonies on residential school experiences that I personally witnessed, and they would emerge during my private conversations with Indigenous scholars, activists, and artists, and people I would meet in the everyday. My field experiences have informed not only my analyses, but influenced the structure of each chapter. While each can be viewed as a stand-alone entity, what ties them together are the re-stories of Canada that I observed first-hand. Stories that foreground Indigenous “vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity” (Taylor, *Archive* 2) challenging Canadians to imagine Canada differently.

### **Theorising the Colonial Present**

Because I do not view colonialism as a thing of the past, my study eschews the idea of the ‘post-colonial.’ Indigenous scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith have regularly argued against using this term. As Smith observes, “[n]aming the world ‘as post-colonial’ is, from [I]ndigenous perspectives, to name colonialism as finished business” (98). Some non-Indigenous voices choose to use ‘post-colonial,’ albeit with caution. American memory scholar Marianne Hirsch suggests that the word “does not mean the end of the colonial but its troubling continuity” (5). Echoing Hirsch’s

contention are theatre and performance scholars Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, who in their co-written text *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* (1996) admit that though “the hazards of using a term with such a prefix are great”, they conclude that it is “certainly more relevant than its alternatives” (2). My assertion, however, is that the idea of the ‘colonial present’ is an important theoretical alternative, which is why I avoid the ‘post’ prefix altogether.

It is also important to address here why the dissertation focuses on the specific concept of ‘settler colonialism.’ For this I must first differentiate between the terms ‘internal colonialism’ and ‘external colonialism.’ Regarding the former, the definition provided by Jace Weaver (Cherokee) is useful. He writes that “in internal colonialism, the autochthonous population is swamped by a larger colonizer group, which, after several generations, no longer has a *métropole* to which to return” (11). External colonialism, on the other hand, concerns an external society that is geographically and territorially separated by a large body of water, such as an ocean, from the colony; this is often referred to as the “blue water” or “salt-water thesis” (Monchalin 63-64; Weaver 11). In this latter form of colonialism, political scientist James Tully explains that:

The colonies can free themselves and form geographically independent societies with exclusive jurisdiction over their respective territories, as Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand have done in relation to the former British Empire. (39)

This is a crucial point. Canada has not been an imperial power maintaining colonies overseas. Therefore, Canadian colonialism is not what

Weaver discusses as a case of “classic colonialism” (11), as the colonialism that took, and takes, place in Canada is against Indigenous populations within its own domestic borders. In Canada, the colonisers have not returned to the original metropole. As Patrick Wolfe writes, “settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event” (388). Drawing upon the work of Wolfe, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang argue that the term ‘internal colonialism’ is not adequate in describing the Canadian context. It is for this reason that they, as well as the many Indigenous scholars and settler allies referred to throughout the dissertation, theorise the concept of ‘settler colonialism.’ Tuck and Yang emphasise that “[s]ettler colonialism operates through internal/external colonial modes simultaneously because there is no spatial separation between metropole and colony” (5). The term foregrounds not only that “settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain” (Ibid), but also that “[i]n order for the settlers to make a place their home, they must destroy and disappear the Indigenous peoples that live there” (6).

This is why Harper’s G20 remarks provide the fulcrum for this study. The stark logic advanced by the former Prime Minister is that because Canada has not built overseas colonies as stations of power and resource extraction, because it is not burdened by colonial legacies in Africa and Asia, Canada does not have an internal colonial history. It not only denies the first subjects of British, French, and later Canadian colonisation, but neutralises this history by rendering it benign, presenting a version in which Indigenous peoples voluntarily surrendered their territorial lands.

## **A Note on Positionality**

I use the word ‘settler’ throughout the dissertation. Like the term ‘post-colonial,’ this is a concept that has given rise to much scholarly debate. Annie Coombes argues that “[t]he term ‘settler’ has about it a deceptively benign and domesticated ring which masks the violence of colonial encounters” of the past and present (2). Jodi Byrd prefers “arrivants”, suggesting a distinction between other racialised non-Indigenous populations, and white-Anglo settlers who arrive with the purpose of dispossessing Indigenous peoples by occupying and claiming ownership of land (xix; cf. Lawrence and Dua 2005; Sharma and Wright 2008). These are valid criticisms, but like non-Indigenous scholars Adam Barker (2009) and Paulette Regan (2010) I employ the term ‘settler,’ as well as ‘non-Indigenous,’ so as to draw attention to those who live on lands stolen from Indigenous populations, a necessary re-framing to describe Canadian society, and better to understand the injustices in Canada focused on relationships of power and how competing claims to the land not only inform the legal, political, and economic landscapes of Canada, but shape national stories.

As a settler-Canadian myself, I make no claim to represent or speak on behalf of Indigenous communities. Much of Western academia has a long record of objectifying, marginalising, silencing, and co-opting Indigenous epistemologies, experiences, and knowledge. As Sto:lo/Coast Salish Nation writer Lee Maracle observes, “[a]cademia has [...], in many ways, become an extension of the process of the colonialism of Indigenous people and the subordination of Indigenous knowing” (110). I, therefore, seek to prioritise Indigenous voices from multiple fields and settings, whilst maintaining an



awareness that “Indigenous communities should be seen as final arbiters of their own histories” (Lawrence, “Rewriting” 24). It is, also, for this reason that this doctoral project does not analyse specific Indigenous oratorical story traditions, nor does it discuss Indigenous myths, including stories of creation: these stories, which belong to Indigenous peoples, are not mine to tell. However, it is worthwhile briefly to consider how stories in the context of Indigenous epistemologies disrupt Euro-centric norms of knowledge production. I will now touch upon this in more general terms.

### **Indigenous Knowledge Production through Story**

While Thomas King’s (Cherokee, Greek, German) statement that “[t]he truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (2) is commonly referenced in discussions regarding both Indigenous and non-Indigenous storytelling practices, Lee Maracle suggests that “[s]tory is not all we are” (92). She views King’s observation as one that “opens the door to reducing our cultural past to amusing anecdotal stories” (82). Maracle elaborates upon her argument by explaining how the concept of ‘oral tradition’ is often simplistically understood by settler society:

The term oral tradition does not spark images of systemic being, organized transference, serious study, and measurement of competence; rather, it creates a diminished image of elders telling stories [...]. The oral tradition as a reduced form of spoken word has come to denote anything that is said, in simple broken English, even in the eyes of some of the nations from which the oracy arises. (92)

Settlers have long treated Indigenous practices of orality as inferior to an emphasis on the written word. This Euro-centric view has begun to change in recent years, albeit slowly, as illustrated by the landmark Aboriginal title case of *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997). This was brought before the Supreme Court in 1984 by Gitksan (or Gitksan) and Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs who argued claims of ownership and jurisdiction over their lands by presenting "oral histories, stories, songs, crests, and names that justified their claims to these territories, claims dating back 12,000 years" (Monchalin 207). J. Edward Chamberlin recounts that at a meeting between the Gitksan nation and government foresters before this dispute over title in Northwest British Columbia was brought to court (he does not give the date), "[t]he officials claimed the land for the government. The natives were astonished by the claim. [...] Finally one of the elders put what was bothering them in the form of a question. 'If this is your land,' he asked, 'where are your stories?'" (1) After several appeals following Judge Justice Allen McEachern's conclusion that oral tradition was inadmissible as evidence, and that it was not 'proper' legal testimony, the Supreme Court concluded in 1997 under the judgment of Chief Justice Antonio Lamer that Indigenous oral histories could be submitted as evidence in land claims cases in Canada. However, as Lisa Monchalin (Algonquin, Métis, Huron, Scottish) points out: "There was no final decision as to whether the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en nations had Aboriginal title to the lands they claimed" (207).

Outside of the justice system, Indigenous communities have re-storied the land throughout Canada's history. One recent example occurred on 22 May 2013; the Tsawout (STÁUTW) nation, the Songhees, other local

WSÁNEĆ nations, and hundreds of supporters in attendance, staged an intervention in Victoria, BC to reclaim the 213-metre high Mount Douglas to its SENĆOTEN name of PKOLS (which translates as “White Rock”/“White Head”). Without an official permit, a carved cedar wood sign bearing the original name of the site was raised and cemented into the ground as part of the ceremony.<sup>14</sup> This “toponymic cleansing” (Azaryahu 389) of Mount Douglas through its renaming as PKOLS is one of many hundreds of interventions that have taken place in recent years, through which Indigenous communities are destabilising the colonial symbolic order of Canada by restoring Indigenous place names that serve as mnemonic devices embodying histories, legal principles, relational teachings, oral traditions, and stories that transfer knowledge of the land (Maracle 2010; L. Simpson, “PKOLS” 363).

Bearing this in mind, it is important to discuss here some of the key ways in which Indigenous models and Euro-Western paradigms of stories diverge. The latter commonly has a distinguishable beginning, middle, and an end. At the start of a story, the *dramatis personae* are presented with a problem or set of problems, this obstacle is then grappled with until an eventual climax, often followed with a resolution (Ibid.). As Lee Maracle explains, in Indigenous storytelling practices conclusions are to be determined by the receiver: “Most of our stories don’t have orthodox ‘conclusions’; that is left to the listeners” (qtd. in Helms 124). She further elucidates that “we discuss not how good the story is, [...] rather, the discourse is about whether we see ourselves in the story, and how we make it right with creation” (“Toward” 83).

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<sup>14</sup> A short film of the ceremony was produced by the activist organisation SocialCoast. See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ib\\_O9vdxDQY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ib_O9vdxDQY); accessed 1 March 2016.

Maracle's insights echo those of Ojibway playwright Drew Hayden Taylor (Curve Lake First Nation), a well-known artist with whom I conducted a telephone interview in May 2016. I asked how the search for conclusions and meaning, often made decidedly clear in non-Indigenous theatre, influence non-Indigenous audiences encounters with Indigenous theatre. His observations are worth quoting at length:

Resolutions are comfortable [...]. For me, [...] the two largest characteristics of Indigenous theatre versus European-Western theatre are twofold. One is the concept of a central character. [...] Where in a lot, not all, but a lot of Native theatre, it's more community-based; it's more of an ensemble piece, because in Native culture, the community is more important than the individual. In fact, in many communities, it's considered very rude, very improper, and a danger to the larger harmony of the community, for anybody to be more important than anybody else. [...] The other interesting thing is the approach to conflict. In Western-European [...] drama comes from conflict, and conflict comes from the characters. [...] In [the] Native community, [...] conflict is approached differently and is massaged in, and has a different way of being utilised in our drama.<sup>15</sup>

Taylor's comments regarding how conflict is understood in the space of theatre, are also raised by Delaware playwright Daniel David Moses, who writes that: "One of the words that always comes up in Native gatherings, and particularly among Native artists, is that it is part of our jobs as Native artists to help people heal" (qtd. in Salverson 122). In non-Indigenous theatre, he

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<sup>15</sup> Taylor, Drew Hayden. Telephone interview with the author. 21 May 2016.

continues, “it seems that you don’t want to heal, you want to keep the wound. In romanticism you’re dancing around a wound. [...] [I]t strikes me as really sick” (qtd. in Ibid.).

Moses is one of many voices who speak of Indigenous theatre as healing. For example, Indigenous artist Yvette Nolan (Algonquin) portrays theatre work, as a deeply kinaesthetic practice, as medicine: “Indigenous theatre artists make medicine by reconnecting through ceremony, through the act of remembering, through building community, and by negotiating solidarities across communities” (3). Métis scholar Jo-Ann Episkenew has also documented at length how engaging in cultural forms can create spaces of agency, empowerment, and resistance to damaging stereotypes of Indigenous peoples perpetuated by settler society. Episkenew explains that, “[t]heater can be transformative, and Indigenous people have come to recognize theatre as an art form they can utilize to examine and address the unresolved grief and trauma present in our communities” (148). While contemporary Indigenous theatre, both community-based and professional, has grown exponentially across the country over the last twenty decades (Ibid.), it is crucially important to take into account how hundreds of years of colonialism has sought to deny and eradicate Indigenous cultural practices and traditions, and with it, Indigenous voices (McKegney 60). This took place not only in the realm of state policy. Writing in 2011, Canadian theatre and performance scholar Alan Filewod makes this observation about non-Indigenous theatre historians neglecting Indigenous theatre:

The absence of First Nations theatre culture in Canadian theatre historiography has arguably been a form of cultural genocide. Only in

recent years has there been a concerted effort to document and theorize First Nations work in terms that have been arrived at through collaboration with Aboriginal artists, activists, and intellectuals.

(*Committing* 72)

Today, such efforts increasingly reach outside of scholarship. In 2019, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Ontario, will open an Indigenous theatre department, shining a much-needed light on Indigenous theatre-making in Canada and offering a public platform for Indigenous artists to reclaim their histories, cultural memories, traditions, and their stories on a national stage.<sup>16</sup>

### **Defining ‘Nation’ and ‘State’**

Before moving forward, it is critical to distinguish here how my study employs the terms ‘state’ and ‘nation.’ For the former, I adopt the description provided by Patrick Anderson, namely that the state is both “highly regimented, always in the process of refining its techniques and apparatuses of domination”, but simultaneously “extremely diffuse, unable to be named with any precision except in terms of its moment-by-moment production” (10). My understanding of ‘nation’ stems from Jen Harvie, who writes that it “is a sense that people share a culture, a culture that may or may not be coterminous with the state’s borders” (2); while she defines national identities as “neither biologically nor territorially given; rather, they are creatively produced or staged” (Ibid.). This is teased out later in the study, but it is important to mention here that ‘nationalism,’ as is related to the nation-state, is entirely different from how Indigenous communities engage with the idea of ‘the

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<sup>16</sup> This announcement was made in March 2016. The details of programming and which Indigenous communities will be involved are yet to be made public (Nestruck).

nation’ and ‘nationhood.’ As scholar Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee Nation) writes, “[n]ation-state nationalism is often dependent upon the erasure of kinship bonds in favor of a code of assimilative patriotism” (“Go Away” 151), whereas Indigenous nationhood is based on “the tribal web of kinship rights and responsibilities that link the People, the land, and the cosmos together in an ongoing and dynamic system of mutually affecting relationships” (Ibid.).

There are many ‘nations’ in Canada, including, but not limited to, hundreds of Indigenous nations. In 2006, the Canadian Parliament declared that the “Québécois form a nation within a united Canada” (qtd. in Wells 88). This was only a symbolic gesture on behalf of the Harper government, however, as it “has no legal expression” (Ibid. 90). According to former Prime Minister Harper, the motion was passed for the sake of “national unity” with the province (qtd. in *CBC News*, “House”). Canada has often been referred to as a country of “two solitudes”, a federation divided between Quebec and the rest of the country (MacLennan [1945] 2008). The Parti Québécois have called two referendums on the question of independence for Quebec in recent decades, one in 1980 and the other in 1995. The latter resulted in a slim margin of 49.4% for Yes and 50.6% for No. Influenced by the work of theatre and performance scholar Julie Burelle (2014), this study understands Quebec as being part of settler Canada. This is despite the fact that, as Burelle observes, much of its francophone population has historically viewed itself as a people colonised by the British Empire, and has “analogized its minority status with the oppression of First Nations peoples”, a framing that “problematically position[s] the Quebecois as allies in a common

decolonization struggle against Canada” (“Encounters” x).

### **Returning to My Archive Story**

This doctoral project has allowed me to interrogate my own relationship with the colonial structures that this study discusses; as a settler, I share in, as Regan writes, the “responsibility for decolonizing ourselves” (“Transformative” 6). It is a lesson made all the more vivid by the memory of reading *We Live at School* at the Archives of Ontario. Ever since my visit to the facility, I have thought about what it meant for the histories of the War of 1812 and the residential school system to have been separated from one another in material, visual, and narrative form. Whilst exhibits relating to the former were on public display, evidence pertaining to the latter was tucked away in catalogued boxes. Furthermore, whereas the curators described the War of 1812 exhibition as offering “a window into the past for all Ontarians, connecting us with our ancestors, our communities and our government” (“About”),<sup>17</sup> there was no mention of the traumatic aftermath and long-term consequences of the war for Indigenous communities, many of whom fought on the side of the British Colony on the understanding that their lands would be returned and protected from further settler encroachment (A. Taylor 2010).

Although this history will be explored further, later in the study, it is useful to briefly mention it here because it informs the theoretical contours of the dissertation. When the war ended in 1815, the British authorities no longer viewed Indigenous peoples as vital military allies, causing a breakdown in relations and contributing to a growing settler-public perception that

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<sup>17</sup> This exhibit, however, did not apply for federal funding (Email exchange with David Taylor, Project Lead at Archives of Ontario, 27 July 2015).



Indigenous peoples were “a problem requiring assimilation or elimination” (Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation et al.). Indigenous communities were increasingly displaced onto reserves, and various federal policies attempting violently to absorb Indigenous populations into settler society were enforced, including the residential school system. In short, Indigenous nations who fought in the War of 1812 were “betrayed” in its aftermath (Ibid.). The exhibition was not, therefore, offering a range of ‘perceptions,’ but a singular perception of the War of 1812 rooted in a settler-oriented perspective and logic of this past’s relationship with the present.

I now turn to the script of Harper’s 2008 apology. This is relevant to the Introduction because official apologies are supposed to mark, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot writes, “a temporal transition: wrong done in a time marked as past is recognized as such, and this acknowledgement creates or verifies a new temporal plane, a present oriented towards the future” (“Abortive” 174). As discussed at the start of the Introduction, I argue that the wording of Harper’s statement was emblematic of the state’s ongoing attempts to sustain the colonial present and “rescue settler futurity” (Tuck and Yang 1). I refer not only to the Prime Minister’s G20 remarks throughout the study, but also to his apology for the IRS system; as I regard both as key cultural texts that render visible the ways in which Canada’s official narration of itself is based on an active forgetting of its colonial histories.

### **The Colonial Present in Harper’s 2008 Apology for the IRS System**

I do not wish to minimise the personal import that the Prime Minister’s apology had for many Indigenous survivors and their families. I recognise the

meaning of such gestures in helping the process of healing; the apology should not be dismissed out of hand, and this is not the purpose of the following analysis. What the next few paragraphs will do, however, is explore how the 2008 apology on the IRS system has helped to uphold Canada's colonial present tense.

The opening line of the apology reads: "The treatment of children in Indian Residential Schools is a sad chapter in our history" (Government of Canada, "House"). In using the cliché of a 'sad chapter,' the notion of 'closure' is pursued from the outset. Similarly, the phrase 'we recognize' and its variants are used nine times throughout the statement, working as a rhetorical strategy through which further to demarcate the past from the present. With this repetition, audiences are reminded again and again that "[p]resent day Canada is unlike the Canada of the past" (Thielen-Wilson 286). The result is a total disavowal of the colonial injustices of the present, with the misdeeds of the past narrated as having been fully accounted for and, finally, exorcised.

The notion of a benign future is also established, implicit in which is the assumption that affable and reconciled Indigenous-state relations will follow swiftly and as a natural result of the apology. While the words 'tragic' and 'wrong' make frequent appearances, there is no suggestion that the IRS policy was a colonial one. Nor was the IRS system acknowledged as having been what might be described as a "devastating prong of an overarching and multifaceted system of colonial oppression" (Henderson and Wakeham, "Colonial" 2). Neither is the colonial legislation of the Indian Act (1876), which enabled and enforced the residential school system, and which remains

a federal policy, mentioned at any point in the apology. The IRS system is presented as a lone regrettable episode in Canadian history, and not as part of a wider pattern of genocidal violence; the structures of settler colonialism are thus actively quarantined from the IRS system (Henderson and Wakeham 2009; Mackey 2013; Thielen-Wilson 2012).

It is also worth noting Harper's assertion that: "In the 1870s, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligations to educate [A]boriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools" (Government of Canada, "House"). By limiting his description of the federal government's involvement in the IRS system to that of 'playing a role,' an acceptance of full responsibility is deferred. This notion of a limited "role" reduces the federal government to the status of an accomplice to the policy, "rather than the architect of the project" (Thielen-Wilson 282).

Harper's explanation as to why the schools existed in the first place also obfuscated the policy's principal objective, that of forcible assimilation. Although he refers at one point to "the emotional, physical and sexual" forms of abuse that took place in the residential schools, he does not linger on this, nor does he provide the requisite context (Government of Canada, "House"). He states: "We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions, that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this" (Ibid.). As Thielen-Wilson argues, "Harper's language masks the true nature and seriousness of the crime" (285). The IRS system is presented, and therefore neutralised, as an unintentional mistake; a well-intended policy of education gone awry. We are

not told about how Indigenous “nations were decimated through the abduction, imprisonment, beating and murder of their children, we are told that children were removed from ‘vibrant’ cultures” (Ibid. 285-286).

Another important point is made by Eva Mackey, who notes that the schools were established after various assimilative federal policies were already in place in the 1850s and 1860s (“Apologizers” 51). By the time the federal government began operating the schools, the state was already involved in “a series of processes [...] [that] combined cultural genocide and land appropriation as a means to open space for the nation with the intent of containing and assimilating Aboriginal peoples” (Ibid.). The IRS system was not just a policy that sought to assimilate Indigenous peoples into Euro-Canadian society through severing children from their families and communities, and by disrupting the generational transmission of Indigenous cultures and knowledge of the land: it was a key part of a larger state project to further accumulate and claim ownership of Indigenous lands. Instead of acknowledging and accepting this, the apology performed what Jeff Corntassel and Cindy Holder call a “politics of distraction”, Harper’s contrition allowing him to “shift the discourse away from restitution of Indigenous homelands and resources” (472).

The word ‘land’ appears only once in the apology, and not in such a way that gave encouragement to those Indigenous peoples seeking restitution. In the apology’s final paragraph, Harper outlines the work of Canada’s TRC, established formally little more than a week before his statement. He concludes with the following:

[A] positive step in forging a new relationship between [A]boriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward [...]. God bless all of you. God bless our land. (Government of Canada, “House”)

As Thielen-Wilson observes, “the final four words [...] affirm the land as belonging to Canada, blessed by the colonizer’s god” (3). Indigenous sovereignty is co-opted into a wider narrative of settler legitimacy at the very moment of the state’s long-awaited apology for the deprivations inherent in the residential school system.

The analyses outlined above have led me to regard the apology as representative of a much larger settler “public transcript”; what James Scott describes as, “to put it crudely, the *self*-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen” (18; italics in original). They illustrate how “settler innocence” is produced and normalised in the public sphere (Tuck and Yang 16): not only was the IRS policy one of ‘good intentions’ gone bad, but the apology amounts to a comprehensive denial of the both the colonial past, and the colonial present.

This was also exemplified by much of the public and media reaction to the apology. According to Eva Mackey, the press coverage “appeared to predetermine that the apology would be accepted. [...] They seemed to assume in advance that it *would be* accepted, and afterwards, that it *had been* accepted” (“Apologizers” 55; italics in original). A cursory glance at some of the headlines in the national and regional newspapers appears to confirm this: “Natives Accept PM’s Apology for the Residential Schools” (*Vancouver*

*Province*); “Aboriginal Leaders Hail Historic Apology” (*Ottawa Citizen*); “Love Means Having to Say Sorry” (*Calgary Herald*); “Apology Brings ‘Hope and Comfort’” (*Toronto Star*); and “Apology is the First Step to True Reconciliation” (*Montreal Gazette*). Indigenous responses were far more mixed, however, with many accepting it and many others rejecting it (see Alia 2010; Mackey 2013). Theodore Fontaine is one of many residential school survivors strongly critical of the apology:

The apology in the House of Commons became a feather in the hat of the government, distinctive in its attention to ceremonial detail yet almost self-congratulatory for its own perceived success in the removal of First Nations influence and participation in the development of the country. (viii)

Fontaine’s contention, regarding the self-congratulatory nature of the apology, is an important one; I view it as emerging not only through how IRS history was narrated, but also through how the state presented its own apology as a performance of the humility and humanity of ‘the nation.’

Feminist and cultural studies scholar, Sara Ahmed, argues that states can use the admission of a shamed past to perform their legitimacy anew, as through an official apology. In this instance, there was a “restoration of an identity of which we [in this case, settler Canada] can be proud (the fact that we are shamed by the past ‘shows’ that we are now good and caring subjects)” (*Cultural* 110). Following a nation’s apology regarding its violent pasts, Ahmed writes that “*the nation can ‘live up to’ the ideals that secure its identity or being in the present*” (109; italics in original). A story of Canada is structured in the apology, one which, consistent with the Euro-Western

narrative paradigms outlined earlier in this Introduction, has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Canada's 'accidentally' violent past begins with the IRS system, which the apology dates as beginning only in the 1870s; the middle of the story concerns the residential school survivors, who carry the 'burden' of this past; resolution is achieved at the end with a pacified and neatly reconciled Canada.

Lauren Berlant writes that "there is always an official story about what the nation means, and how it works" (*Anatomy* 11). The narrative of Canada as promoted by Harper in his apology, as well as in his comments at the G20 summit in Pittsburgh, represents, I contend, the official - that is, state-mandated - story of 'the nation.' As explored throughout this study, this would further emerge in different ways, through the case studies selected for analysis.

## **Chapter Outlines**

Chapter 1 examines the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the War of 1812. This previously largely forgotten war was resurrected in the public mind by Stephen Harper's federal Conservative Party government, which gave itself a leading role in staging the nationwide commemorative events. The war was presented as the official narrative of 'the nation,' in which Anglo/British, French-Canadian, and Indigenous allies were presented as successfully fighting together for Canada and national identity. My examination of the bicentennial explores the politics that were inherent to the making of the commemorations. I also demonstrate how we can see this narrative publicly

surface through the federal government's changing of national symbols to mirror its rebranding of Canada as having been forged in the crucible of war.

I explore how the bicentennial was a continuation of the state's ongoing nation-building project by performing a claim of settler legitimacy to the land. The chapter traverses a range of representations of the War of 1812, including monuments, advertising, and other federal symbols. I also reflect upon my own observations made during the 2012 Canada Day festivities staged in Ottawa, for which the War of 1812 was chosen as the main theme for the celebrations, and consider some of the discursive ways members of the general public responded to the federal government's attempts to encourage them to participate in its War of 1812 commemorations. Chapter 1 concludes with an analysis of the play *Sovereign Alliances* (2012) written by Indigenous artist Herbie Barnes (Anishnabe). I explore the ways in which this work troubles the story, and ultimately re-stories, the legacies of the War of 1812 as promoted by the Conservative Party under Harper's leadership.

In the late fall and early winter of 2012, with the War of 1812 bicentennial in the background, the Indigenous-led grassroots social protest movement, Idle No More (INM) - the subject of Chapter 2 - was founded. INM began in response to the legislative amendments proposed in the Conservative government's Bill C-45, The Jobs and Growth Act, 2012, its protests reverberating and sweeping across the country in 2012-2013. Critics of the legislation, which has since been enacted, argue that it violates inherent Indigenous rights of sovereignty and autonomy through measures removing federal safeguards and diminishing the protection of the country's navigable waterways, fisheries, and Indigenous traditional lands.



Chapter 2 begins by discussing how the settler colonial present is secured through Bill C-45. It then explores how narratives of national identity, as produced by the state, were called into question in the larger context of the INM movement. And finally, it examines how both the colonial past and the colonial present were rendered visible through the high-profile hunger strike of Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat Cree Nation (11 December 2012 to 23 January 2013), who staged her intervention in protest against the federal government's indifference not only to the deplorable conditions of her reserve in Northern Ontario, but to those afflicting communities across Canada. I analyse how Chief Spence's hunger-striking body performed as a site of resistance to state violence. Resistance, because she refused to do what the state has historically sought to do to Indigenous bodies through law: to make Indigenous bodies, and particularly the bodies of Indigenous women, disappear from the national landscape, with the intent of further accumulating access to land and resources.

The launch of INM happened against the backdrop not just of the War of 1812 bicentennial, but also during the national events organised by the touring TRC, the subject of Chapter 3. I begin the chapter by tracing the political and social circumstances that led to the initiation of Canada's TRC, before turning to the staging of the TRC as a live event. I incorporate into this analysis my own experiences of attending three national gatherings: in Saskatoon (June 2012), Montreal (April 2013), and Vancouver (September 2013). I then move on to the Commission's mandate, discussing how its harnessing of a therapeutic language situates reconciliation as being intrinsically tied to a metaphor of healing; a paradigm, I contend, that

anchored the TRC as a national performance of memory-making, and an official project that sought to re-story the stories of Canada based on representations of national innocence and settler benevolence. My examination also explicates how the Commission encouraged the idea that reconciliation is experienced as an “emotional repertoire” (Hurley 2010; 2011). I explore how this shaped the dramaturgy of the TRC, and analyse how this was reaffirmed through the enactment of two symbolic practices: the Bentwood Box and the gathering of ‘Tear Tissues.’

My Conclusion gives a personal account of a ‘Walk for Reconciliation’ that I attended in downtown Vancouver in 2013 the day after the TRC concluded its national event in British Columbia. The event was organised by Reconciliation Canada, a non-profit working in collaboration with the Commission. I close the dissertation by considering what it means for Canada to transition into an ostensible age of reconciliation in the colonial present.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**“The Fight for Canada”:**  
**Staging ‘the Nation’ Through the War of 1812 Bicentennial**

In 2012, ahead of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the declaration of war on 18 June 1812 by the US against the UK and its dependencies, including British North America (modern-day Canada),<sup>18</sup> Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued an official message on the federal government’s website.<sup>19</sup> Describing the series of military battles engaged on land and water in Upper Canada (southern Ontario), Lower Canada (the southern portion of Quebec), on the Great Lakes, the Atlantic, and in the US, as “a seminal event in the making of our great country”, the statement declared:

On the occasion of its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I invite all Canadians to share in our history and commemorate our proud and brave ancestors who fought and won against enormous odds. [...]

June 2012 will mark 200 years since the declaration of the War of 1812 - a war that saw Aboriginal peoples, local and volunteer militias, and English and French-speaking regiments fight together to save Canada from American invasion.

The War helped establish our path toward becoming an independent and free country, united under the Crown with a respect for linguistic and ethnic diversity. The heroic efforts of Canadians then helped

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<sup>18</sup> During the War of 1812, British North America consisted of seven scattered and individual colonies: Upper Canada, Lower Canada, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Island, and Newfoundland. The term British North America covers the period between 1783 and 1867. The latter date was when Upper and Lower Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia were brought into the Dominion of Canada.

<sup>19</sup> The website [www.1812.gc.ca](http://www.1812.gc.ca), which now exists only in archived format, included historical background on the battles, information about commemorative events throughout the country, resources for teachers, and advertisements for the bicentennial.

define who we are today, what side of the border we live on, and which flag we salute. [...]

Events surrounding the 1812-15 armed conflict laid the foundation for Confederation and established the cornerstones of many of our political institutions. In short, the Canada we know today would not exist had the invasions of 1812-15 not been repelled. [...]

I invite Canadians across the country to learn more about this key chapter in our history and to take part in many of the activities and events that will pay tribute to our history and heritage. (Government of Canada, “Prime”)<sup>20</sup>

Presented here is a narration of Canadian history that goes beyond the three-year commemorative project (2012-2015), staged at the cost of 28 million dollars in federal funds.<sup>21</sup> Harper’s statement portrays a unified and historic pan-national identity in which Canada’s “past, present, and by implication, its future” (Bodnar 15) is explained through the War of 1812. Although, throughout the anniversary, the Prime Minister and other federal officials vigorously branded and promoted the War of 1812 as “a watershed event” (Government of Canada, “On the Occasion of a Funding”), this war did not have a distinct place in national memory before the bicentennial.<sup>22</sup> This begs a series of questions underpinning the central concern of this chapter,

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<sup>20</sup> For a map and timeline of the battles, see <http://www.eighteentwelve.ca>; accessed 1 September 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Email exchange with Daniel Larabie, Senior Director, Special Projects, National Events and Commemorations, Canadian Heritage, 12 September 2016.

<sup>22</sup> This is not to say that the war was entirely unknown, or that it was not memorialised in Canada before its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was only during the bicentennial, however, that the federal government explicitly framed this past via the trope of Canada’s origins. It is important to note that it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss how this war was commemorated during its various anniversaries. For an overview, see D. Schwartz (“War of 1812”); for scholarly examinations of how figures from this conflict have gained the status of ‘heroes’ in Canadian popular culture before the bicentennial, see Brownlie (2012); Filewod (2002); N. Knowles (1997); Morgan (2012).

principally: How was this past “made to matter” (Irwin-Zarecka 7), and why was it revived by the federal government?

Chapter 1 is focused on the implications of the War of 1812 being made into a collective past, from which ‘the nation’ then stories its identity. Like any public commemorative activity, the bicentennial was an inherently political project. While state officials may treat them as inert, identities - whether national, regional, communal, or individual - evolve and respond to different times, spaces, politics, and settings. Identity is “an ongoing process” (Holdsworth 21). As historian John Gillis writes, “memories and identities are not fixed things, but representations or constructions of reality, subjective rather than objective phenomena” (3). In elaborating this argument, which he applies to his study of national commemorations, Gillis pursues a concept of “memory work”, suggesting that it “is, like any other kind of physical or mental labor, embedded in complex class, gender and power relations that determine what is remembered (or forgotten)” (Ibid.).

My analysis of the War of 1812 bicentennial takes Gillis’ theorisation as one of its starting points. I seek to excavate the generated memory work that emerged through this commemorative project and render visible that, though its “results may appear consensual”, it was “in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation” (Ibid. 5). My principal concern, therefore, is what Jan Assmann describes as the “mnemohistory” of a historical event, a term he coined to explore how “the past is modeled, invented, reinvented, and reconstructed by the present” (*Moses* 9). Mnemohistory recognises that “the past cannot be stored but

always has to be ‘processed’ and mediated” (Ibid. 14). I consider how this is accomplished through performance.

By explicating the bicentennial through the lens of performance, one can trace the ways in which this commemorative event was shaped to meet the demands of the present. However, first we must consider the memory work that took place through the activities of the bicentennial’s central stakeholder, the Government of Canada under the leadership of Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The prime minister was central to the commemorations; as Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, James Moore, stated in 2011:

The Prime Minister is personally very involved in this because he recognizes that, unlike a lot of other countries where you sort of have a singular watershed moment - or a Gettysburg address - we have not as many of these moments which are pan-Canadian in consequence in terms of the development of the country. (Chase, “Ottawa to Tread”)

In selecting the War of 1812 as deserving of commemoration, aligning this past with the present, and thereby giving it new meaning and significance, the bicentennial functioned as a public platform for the Conservative Party to impress upon Canada new martial “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) to story ‘the nation.’

For Eric Hobsbawm, an invented tradition “is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition” (1). His theory encourages us to pay close attention to how officials attempt to control representations of a nation’s history, and to

consolidate loyalty to attributed common national memories, through repeated practices that are either loosely based on the past or entirely invented, in such a way that “automatically implies continuity with the past” (Ibid.). This provides a way of considering how ideologies are not only narrativised, but embodied. It is for this reason that I use the metaphor of ‘staging the nation’ in my title as I seek to foreground “the performativity of national construction”, namely the ways in which “the act of doing/imagining calls the nation into being” (Lo 3).

It is worth mentioning from the outset how the War of 1812 was received by Canadians at the national level. Despite the government’s optimism that Canadians would embrace its historical narrative with alacrity, various polls and surveys have suggested otherwise. An annual survey from the Department of National Defence, conducted by Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc., concluded in 2012 that many Canadians knew next to nothing about the War of 1812 both prior to and during the commemorations (*Canadian Press*, “Few”). A 2013 poll carried out by Nanos Research indicated that the nationwide event had “failed to excite Canadians”, and calculated “that only about three out of every 10 Canadians supported the government in actively encouraging the celebration of the War of 1812” (Galloway, “War”). With this in mind, my study also asks: Why did this story of Canada fail to penetrate the national imaginary? In what ways did the public engage with this story? And what stories were told by those offering alternatives to the state-driven master narrative of the War of 1812?

This chapter proceeds in two parts. Part I is focused on the process of the Government of Canada “‘curating the nation,’ where the nation [...] is

equated with an open-air museum where the state, as curator, decides what to display and how” (Witz 11). I begin by considering the larger political and social contours informing the bicentennial project. I discuss how after Stephen Harper’s accession to power in 2006 following 13 years of Liberal Party rule, he attempted to undo “the apparatus of modern Canada” (Wells 68-69) constructed by successive Liberal administrations. Harper sought to replace narratives of national identity long inextricably associated with the Liberals, Canada’s governing party for much of the twentieth century, principally the Liberal definition of Canada as a ‘peacekeeping nation.’ As he sought to dismantle the image of the country as a global peacekeeper, Harper offered in its place a story of Canada as a ‘warrior nation’ (McKay and Swift 2012; Richler 2012; Sjolander 2014).<sup>23</sup> This endeavour was made explicit during the staging of the War of 1812 bicentennial. This genealogy is crucial, as it can help us to surmise why so many Canadians were neither persuaded by Harper’s invented tradition of Canada as a valiant fighter, nor convinced collectively to abandon the invented tradition of Canada as a peacekeeping nation.<sup>24</sup>

Whilst I suggest that on one level, the War of 1812 advances a new story of ‘the nation,’ what underpins this story is not new. As other scholars examining the ways in which Canada has storied itself have documented, there is one central taxonomic scheme grounding various official narrations of ‘the nation’ (Furniss 1999; Mackey 1999; Razack 2004; Regan 2010);

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<sup>23</sup> The term ‘warrior nation’ has been applied widely by scholars and political commentators examining the Harper’s government narrative of Canada.

<sup>24</sup> Recent studies reveal that peacekeeping continues to be viewed as a defining element of Canada’s ‘national character.’ For example, after examining a range of opinion surveys on public attitudes towards Harper’s foreign policy, Roland Paris concluded in 2014 that “there is little evidence” to suggest that Canadians have shifted away from embracing the image of the country as peacekeeping nation (“Are” 301-302).



whether through narratives highlighting societal values of multiculturalism and tolerance, through images of the country as a peacekeeping nation,<sup>25</sup> or narrations that celebrate stories of war, what threads past and present state performances of national identity is the invented tradition of “white settler innocence” (Mackey, *House* 39).

The second half of Part I looks at the Conservative Party’s formulation of its War of 1812 “master commemorative narrative”, applying memory scholar Yael Zerubavel’s concept in her work on Israeli nationalism to explain “a broader view of history, a basic ‘story line’ that is culturally constructed and that provides the group members with a general notion of their shared past” (6). I explore how we can see this master commemorative narrative emerge through the federal government’s use of national iconography, and in its changing of national symbols to mirror its rebranding of Canada as having been forged in the crucible of war. National iconography provides a productive site to explore how nations are storied. As Nadine Holdsworth writes, “[t]hey are a recognisable shorthand for the nation that symbolises something associated with the nation’s history or cultural practices,” that also “[suggest] symbolic membership of a national citizenry[;] icons are an important part of national branding” (55). This analysis includes an examination of the significance of the restoration of state iconography memorialising the country’s historic ties to the British monarchy, and the unveiling of a War of 1812 monument on Parliament Hill.

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<sup>25</sup> This chapter focuses on settler conceptions of peacekeeping, which as Paulette Regan notes “privileges a British imperialist legal vision of how one constructs peaceful coexistence” (*Unsettling* 72; for a historical analysis of Indigenous philosophies of diplomacy see *Ibid.* 143-170).

I continue this discussion with my examination of the federal government's advertising campaign, "The Fight for Canada" (2012). This one-minute commercial dramatises the history of the War of 1812 as a story of collaboration and friendship between Anglo/British, French-Canadian, and Indigenous allies, who are shown coming together on the battlefield to fend off invading American troops. My principal argument in this section is that "The Fight for Canada" was produced in the service of sustaining the 'colonial present' by presenting an image of everlasting harmony between settlers and Indigenous peoples. If the country's origins are rooted in the War of 1812, it follows that the violent founding of what would become Canada can be disavowed in this latest version of the official story of 'the nation.' Reading this commercial as enabling "willed forgetting and silence" (Luker 67) of Canada's colonial history, I suggest that the bicentennial was a continuation of the state's ongoing nation-building project performing a claim of settler legitimacy to the land, an issue markedly absent in numerous sustained analyses of the Conservative-led commemorations to date.<sup>26</sup>

Part II explores my own personal experiences of attending commemorative activities in the summer of 2012. While travelling through parts of Southern Ontario, a major War of 1812 battlefield, I was struck by the Conservative Party's resolute efforts to generate a "commemorative fever" (Misztal 2).<sup>27</sup> These efforts were particularly palpable in Ottawa on Canada

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<sup>26</sup> An exception is Sean Carleton's "Rebranding Canada with Comics: *Canada 1812: Forged in Fire* and the Continuing Co-optation of Tecumseh" (2014). Through examining the Conservative Party funded comic book *Canada 1812: Forged in Fire* (2012), produced by High Fidelity HDTV, in partnership with several public and private parties, including the federal department of Parks Canada, Carleton concludes that the text obfuscates Canada's colonial history.

<sup>27</sup> Although the bicentennial was branded by the Conservative Party as a national event, both government and non-government funded commemorative activities mostly took place in Ontario.

Day. Although 1 July marks the anniversary of the enactment of the Constitution Act in 1867,<sup>28</sup> in 2012 the War of 1812 was chosen as the main theme for the festivities. As “key markers in national biography”, official days serve as opportunities for the state to rearticulate narratives of national identity, to reinforce displays of national bonds, and serve as occasions for the nation to publicly story its sense of self to itself, whilst also projecting how it wants to be seen by the outside world (McCrone and McPherson, “Marking” 213).

State celebrations are also “subject to contestation” (Ibid., “Introduction” 5), however. In this section I highlight some of the discursive ways in which the general public responded to the federal government’s attempts to encourage citizens to participate in its War of 1812 commemorations by unpacking three separate moments that I observed on or near Parliament Hill: the distribution and wearing of War of 1812 paraphernalia, the public’s engagement with a large War of 1812 map, and an Indigenous protest that dissented from the Conservative Party’s master commemorative narrative.<sup>29</sup>

The final section of the chapter considers how the War of 1812 and its legacies are explored in the setting of Indigenous theatre. I use as my case study *Sovereign Alliances* (2012), written and directed by Herbie Barnes (Anishinaabe), which premiered at Toronto’s Elgin Theatre on 19 July 2012.

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<sup>28</sup> The Act united the colonies of the Province of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick into a federal state, creating the Dominion of Canada. Originally called Dominion Day, in 1982 the national holiday was renamed as Canada Day.

<sup>29</sup> In an effort to call attention to micro-moments of the bicentennial, I limit my analysis to activities that took place off the main-stage during the Canada Day celebrations. For how narratives of national identity have evolved in the context of federal government policy objectives, and how this has been reflected in Canada Day performances see Matthew Hayday’s study (2010), which examines this national holiday from 1958 into the 1990s.

My reading of the play focuses on its climactic moment, in which the character of Tom is interrogated by US security officers for crossing the Canada-US border with his Iroquois passport.<sup>30</sup> I select this scene for close analysis in part because I view it as articulating a challenge to the “ideological thrust” (McMahon 6) of the state’s commemorative project, as it disrupts the Conservative Party’s celebratory narrative that the war established “what side of the border we live on, and which flag we salute” (Government of Canada, “Prime”). I explore the ways in which *Sovereign Alliances* forces us to question the country’s territorial borders, its crossings, and with it, narratives of national identity as told through the state’s War of 1812 bicentennial story.

### **Part I: From Keeping Peace to Making War as the Official National Story**

Assessing how the War of 1812 is presently recalled in different national popular memories, Jim Hill, manager at the Niagara Parks Commission, summarises its representation as follows: “Canadians are sure they won the War of 1812, Americans are pretty sure, and the British never heard of it” (qtd. in Hampson). Historians, meanwhile, are inclined to observe that “the war had ended in a military draw” (Hickey, *War of 1812* 307). In the UK, writes scholar Donald Hickey, “the very phrase ‘War of 1812’ is likely to conjure up images of Napoleon’s invasion of Russia”; the war fought in North America by a British colony was, by comparison, “little more than a sideshow, a footnote to the much grander and more consequential Napoleonic Wars”

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Iroquois’ is a European term to describe the Haudenosaunee (“People of the Longhouse”) Confederacy, which is made-up of six nations: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora. Scholar Laura DeVries documents that, “[i]n total, there are eighteen Haudenosaunee communities located throughout Ontario, Quebec, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and upstate New York, each of which include varying compositions of the various six nations of the Confederacy as well as members of other dependent nations” (83).

(Ibid.). Of the US, the UK, and Canada, it is the latter that made the greatest effort to produce a national bicentennial. Although activities in the US were “noticeably more modest” than those in Canada, attempts were made by War of 1812 enthusiasts to establish a state-wide commemorative commission, but the request was routinely vetoed in Congress. Instead, various states, communities, and branches of the US military organised their own activities, mostly funded by sponsorship and donations (Austen). The War of 1812 is not considered to have profoundly shaped the American national imaginary, however. It remains an “obscure war” (Hickey, *War of 1812* 1) overshadowed by the Civil War (1861-1865) in popular culture.

Canada, however, had no equivalent seminal event from which to narrate its national story before the War of 1812 bicentennial. Writer Daniel Francis observed in 1997 that “[Canadians] have no myth of creation, no narrative which celebrates the birth of the nation, not even a central image” (*National* 18). In the same year, novelist and essayist John Ralston Saul stated that Canada writ large has “little heroic war culture” and “no interest in the classical representation of glory” found in war (*Reflections* 143). This the Conservative Party sought to change in 2012, when it presented the War of 1812 in similar terms to those of Abraham Lincoln in the American public memory: “a *lamp*, illuminating the ideals of the American people as well as a *mirror* reflecting their interests” (B. Schwartz, *Post-Heroic* xi; italics in original). As a historical resource from which the country’s “myths, memories, values and symbols” were now to be storied (A. Smith, *Ethnic* 15), the War of 1812 was to function both as a lamp and as a mirror for Canada.

The “search for a usable past” (Commager 1967) became a key project for Harper, described by a former aide as “a big believer in the idea that nations are built by narratives - stories they tell themselves” (qtd. in Chase, “Myth”); in the War of 1812 he appeared to find the story he and many other Canadian conservatives had been looking for. In the early 2000s, numerous conservative politicians, scholars, and analysts raised concerns that Canada had entered into an era of diminishment. Leading this chorus was Andrew Cohen, who in his book *While Canada Slept* (2003) stated that “Canada has become a lesser country at home, it has become a lesser country abroad” (24). This perspective was also articulated in Robert Greenhill’s influential External Voices Project (2005), which studied international perceptions of Canada from 1989-2004, in which he concluded that this was a period “of decline - decline in our reputation and relevance with the United States, decline in our leadership role in development, and decline in the international significance of our peacekeeping” (34). Such concerns were indicative of the discussions that took place amongst Canadian conservatives following the terrorist attacks in New York City and near Washington, D.C. on 11 September 2001. Canadian journalist Paul Wells explains that “[w]hile 9/11 had provoked a tide of patriotic indignation in the United States, among Canadian conservatives it had provoked disgust at the country’s perceived shortcomings” (67). The refusal of the Liberal federal government of Jean Chrétien (1993-2003) to join the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, had engendered “widespread embarrassment” on the political Right, many of whom regarded their Liberal opponents as being weak on terrorism (Wells 66). Many conservatives felt that the Iraq War was an occasion for Canada to have inserted itself as an

aggressive force on the world stage; Chrétien's decision was a lost opportunity for the country to have restored to the national public memory what some felt was its martial heritage (see Harper and Day 2003; Granatstein 2004).<sup>31</sup>

The War of 1812 bicentennial should be considered as a key part of the response to this conservative 'crisis,' which suggested that Canada could not return to its supposed former greatness without an origin story on which 'the nation' could model itself. It must also be noted here, however, that the question of what Canadian national identity entails, with its multiple regional, ethnic, and linguistic identities, has long been a preoccupation of not just of successive federal governments, but also of popular culture and academic discourse. As scholar Eva Mackey explains, this is a longstanding and ongoing debate:

From colonial times to the present, intellectual, politicians of every hue, activists, state institutions, and businesses have sought to define, defend and differentiate Canadian identity. [...] Everywhere, Canadian identity is seen as crisis-ridden, as a fragile and weak entity constantly under attack and in need of vigilant defence. Some people say that Canada has no identity at all, or at least not a real one.

(*House* 22)

Mackey observes that "the constant reproduction of [an] 'identity crisis' [in Canada] makes possible the regulation and state intervention in identity at national as well as local levels" (*House* 120). This is precisely the context into

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<sup>31</sup> Such anxieties about Canada's supposed irrelevance in the world were also noted in earlier discussions concerning public teachings of Canadian history. In his controversial polemic *Who Killed Canadian History?* (1998), well-known military historian J.L. Granatstein asserted that in Canada "[t]here are no heroes in our past to stir the soul, and no myths on what a national spirit can be built - or so we are told" (3). For many years, his text "incited a moral panic that filled Canadian newspapers" (Hulan 782; see also Carr 2005).

which Stephen Harper would enter and present the Conservative Party's War of 1812 commemorative project as a badly needed intervention to establish *the* national story for Canada, providing a militaristic account of Canadian history that would explain Canada's national identity both to Canadians and to international audiences.

According to historian Peter Burke, "[g]iven the fact that the social memory, like the individual memory, is selective, we need to identify the principles of selection and to note how they vary from place to place or from one group to another and how they change over time" (46). In her essay "Through the Looking Glass: Canadian Identity and the War of 1812" (2014), political theorist Claire Turenne Sjolander emphasises that the selection of the War of 1812 "must be understood as a distinctly political strategy" (154) of the Conservative Party:

If the Harper government had wanted to celebrate an important event in Canadian history in the year 2012, for whatever reasons of national unity or harmony, it had other choices: 2012 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of [M]edicare in Saskatchewan, as well as the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. (Ibid.)

Sjolander argues that the reason these anniversaries were not commemorated was because of the government's determination to advance a domestic partisan agenda. For many Canadians, the introduction of a national Medicare program, and the constitutional entrenchment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, were Liberal achievements. Under Harper, the anniversary of the Canada's universal healthcare system "passed by unnoticed" (J. Simpson,



“Anniversary”), while the Charter’s anniversary warranted only a press release (*Canadian Press*, “Charter”). Throughout Harper’s more than nine years in office, the Conservative Party deliberately and consistently downplayed Liberal symbols and milestones in order “to assure the destruction of the Liberal Party as the ‘natural governing party’ of Canada” (Sjolander 155).

Harper sought to break the connection between Canadian identity and the Liberals in the minds of citizens, including by challenging the key longstanding political and symbolic pillars of his main political rivals. This is reflected in the following statement by a strategist who worked for Harper in his 2005 campaign:

We didn’t have a competing narrative [...]. What are the symbols people talk about when they talk about Canada? Healthcare. The Charter. Peacekeeping. The United Nations. The CBC. Almost every single example was a Liberal achievement or a Liberal policy.

We had gotten to a point in Canada where the conservative side of politics had been marginalized - where we weren’t even recognized as legitimately Canadian. (qtd. in Wells 68)

Even before the Conservatives won power in 2006, their election manifesto indicated Stephen Harper’s interest in inserting his party at the heart of national identity.<sup>32</sup> The Conservative platform declared that “Canada is losing its place in the world and its unity at home” (Conservative Party 42), blaming the Liberal Party for having “compromised democratic principles to appease dictators”, and for demoralising the Canadian military (Ibid. 44; Paris, “Are” 27). Harper adopted his first federal mandate with more than just an ambition

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<sup>32</sup> In 2003, the Canadian Alliance Party and the Progressive Conservative Party merged into the Conservative Party of Canada.

to “restore pride in Canada” through policies on economics and trade (Conservative Party 42); an explicit early goal was to offer a new official story of ‘the nation.’ Although this process began before the War of 1812 bicentennial,<sup>33</sup> it would be this project that became Harper’s most generously-funded and centrally-directed effort to appoint the Conservative Party as the natural “synonym for Canada” (Wells 69).

It is important, however, to avoid analysing the politics of memory in a way that maintains a “monotonous” binary. As American sociologist Barry Schwartz argues:

Conceiving the past as a political fact, made and remade in the service of new power arrangements, leads to an atemporal concept of collective memory, one that makes the past precarious, its contents hostage to the political conditions of the present. [...] True, the past is always transmitted through the lines of authority. [...] This defining does not mean that our instructors were consciously or unconsciously manipulating us. It does not mean that officials planned commemorative celebrations in order to get us to do their bidding or make us loyal to a political system against which we would have otherwise rebelled. (*Forge* 16-17)

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<sup>33</sup> According to McKay and Swift (2012), Harper’s project to engender Canadians to understand the story of ‘the nation’ through a militaristic lens was attempted through the Battle of Vimy Ridge (1917). In 2007, there was a rededication ceremony for a newly refurbished Vimy Ridge Memorial in France, which received mass public attention and sustained media coverage back in Canada. However, the anniversary of Vimy was not a national commemorative project like that of the multi-year War of 1812 bicentennial. As will be discussed later, the making of the War of 1812 as a story of ‘the nation’ was selected in part because the Conservative Party sought an origin story of Canada that was previously unclaimed by other political parties. It is important to note, however, that the Battle of Vimy Ridge has long been celebrated as a defining moment for Canadian national identity (see Zacharias 2012).

Similarly, sociologist Barbara Misztal observes that “[t]he memory of a social group cannot always be reduced to the political aim of sustaining relations of power as it is not necessarily solely imposed from above” (61). These studies, I argue, overlook the contested struggles over claims to national memory, history, and identity that are inherently part of governmental nation branding pursuits, defined by Simon Anholt as “national identity made tangible, robust, communicable and above all useful” (qtd. in Aronczyk 291); or in the words of Melissa Aronczyk, “a more progressive form of patriotism” (Ibid. 294).

Nation branding projects involve the development and implementation of state-resourced marketing programs, through integrated and centralised schemes that select and circulate particular cultural symbols and ascribed national values, in order to advance foreign investment, economic growth, tourism, and to justify and prioritise federal policy (Aronczyk 2009; Jansen 2008; Nimijean 2014). Neither Schwartz nor Misztal engage with how this top-down process explicitly seeks to re-shape public memory to meet such political ends. As numerous scholars, journalists, and political commentators have argued, the Canadian War of 1812 bicentennial was a project that sought not only to articulate a new narrative for ‘the nation,’ but also to rebrand Canada through remaking the story of Canada as the story of the Conservative Party (Frenette 2014; Jeffrey 2015; MacKinnon 2015; McCready 2012; McKay and Swift 2012; Nimijean 2014; Paris 2014; Richler 2012; Sjolander 2014; Staring 2013).

To achieve this, however, the image of Canada as a peacekeeper nation, long understood as “[p]art of the mythology of what it means to be

Canadian” (Berdahl and Raney qtd. in Paris, “Are” 305), would have to be disrupted and replaced. Before examining the ways in which the Conservative government attempted to overhaul dominant national narratives associated with the Liberal Party, I will outline how peacekeeping became established as a distinctly Canadian tradition, shaping how ‘the nation’ performed its identity for several decades both internally and internationally before Harper assumed power. My objectives here are threefold. I consider how peacekeeping, like all invented traditions according to Hobsbawm, “are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition” (1-2). I also discuss how peacekeeping as a foreign policy practice and as mythology is understood and critiqued. Finally, I trace what peacekeeping as a national ideology does in the context of the colonial present.

Canada’s ‘golden age’ of peacekeeping is strongly associated with the Suez Crisis, the 1956 invasion of the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt by Israeli troops, followed by the UK and France, after Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalised the Anglo-French owned Suez Canal Company. As the conflict unfolded, Lester B. Pearson, then Canada’s Secretary of State for External Affairs, who would later lead a Liberal government as Prime Minister (1963-1968), proposed a UN Emergency Force to supervise an immediate ceasefire. After the General Assembly adopted the resolution, the first international armed peacekeeping force under UN command was dispatched to secure the peace by maintaining a buffer zone, while the UK, France, and

Israel withdrew their troops from Egyptian territory.<sup>34</sup> In 1957 Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts, with the committee claiming that Pearson “had saved the world” from war (qtd. in A. Cohen 11); a prize that effectively “told Canadians that their country had arrived on the world stage” (Granatstein qtd. in Ankersen 97). With this milestone, “Canada adopted [peacekeeping], adapted it, advanced it, and enhanced it, making it the essence of its internationalism” (A. Cohen 60). Over subsequent years, peacekeeping was increasingly portrayed as “an element of the modern Canadian mosaic” and ingrained in the national psyche as “com[ing] naturally to Canadians” (Manson). Moreover, peacekeeping became recognised as a “proud tradition” distinguishing Canada from the US (Whitworth 89).<sup>35</sup> Many came to believe that “Canadians keep the peace; Americans fight wars” (Granatstein, *Canada’s Army* 460). Although peacekeeping is commonly viewed as “a Liberal achievement” (Wells 68), both Liberal and Conservative federal governments have deployed thousands of troops to conflict zones on UN operations.

While the idea of Canada self-identifying as a peacekeeper is popular with the general public, a number of political commentators and academics (often, but not exclusively, military historians) are critical of the mythic quality given to the practice by successive federal governments. For example, J.L. Granatstein contends that peacekeeping as a mythological sign

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<sup>34</sup> The first peacekeeping mission of the United Nations, which was deployed during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, was unarmed.

<sup>35</sup> Anti-Americanism is a recurring theme in Canadian history and has underlined much past debate on national identity. Numerous domestic initiatives attempting to counteract the perceived threat of ‘Americanism’ have taken place, including the influential Massey Report (1951), which recommended enhanced government spending in arts and culture to encourage Canadian content. In the context of the economy, anti-American sentiment dissipated with the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement of 1989, but remained entrenched in domestic politics in the 1990s (Higgott and Malbasic 8).

perpetuates the “naïve attitude [...] that by simply donning a blue beret, Canadian soldiers could bring peace where only war or civil war had prevailed” (*Canadian Military* 20). Political scientist Janice Gross Stein emphasises that the mythology serves as “nostalgia for some romantic view of Canada”, one that is based on an outdated image of the practice from “a very brief period in the fifties and sixties” (qtd. in Paris, “Are” 285). The mythological understanding of peacekeeping as only maintaining neutrality in conflict zones, Granatstein, Stein, and others argue, obscures the reality that peacekeeping has had to evolve to respond to present day conflicts in ways that divert from the myth, including the use of robust weaponry to attain the objective of peace. The ways in which the term ‘peacekeeping’ is employed within domestic discourse is itself revealing, illustrating how the practice is positioned in the national imagination as symbolising the absence of violence. However, as scholar Michael Carroll notes, UN peacekeeping operations have always been dangerous, and “[s]nipers’ bullets, roadside explosives, and full out military confrontations have always been a reality” (171). Even when operations are more accurately characterised as peace enforcement, namely the use of coercive measures through “military assets to enforce a peace against the will of the parties to a conflict” (Caplan), the term ‘peacekeeping’ remains the common descriptor; as Walter Dorn observes, the word itself “has a [...] pleasant sonorous quality” (“Canadian” 18).

Others centre their criticisms on the notion that the origins of international peacekeeping are attributed to Pearson, in addition to the idea that Canada has always been a peacekeeping nation. The latter was propagated, for example, by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien after announcing

Canada's deployment to the UN peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste in 1999, "[w]e are always there, like the Boy Scouts" (qtd. in Carroll 167). As Andrew Cohen argues, however, contrary to the national myth, when peacekeeping first emerged as a practice of the UN in the late 1940s "Canada did not initially embrace it" (59). Michael Carroll also underlines that Pearson's idea for an UN Emergency Force was not "motivated solely by altruism" (167). It was a product of the Cold War, specifically a response to the escalating threat of the Soviet Union exploiting the situation in Egypt. The Suez Crisis had revealed a gulf in relations between Britain and the US (America did not lend support to the UK), potentially splitting the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Carroll argues that the peacekeeping mythology as national ideology decontextualises Pearson's motivations, which were first and foremost a pragmatic and strategic effort to buttress the Western military alliance, and thus "based on eminently practical factors of national self-interest" (167). In his assessment of the press coverage of the Suez Crisis in Canada, Carroll also points out that many Canadians were sympathetic to Britain's military actions in Egypt, and "were critical of Pearson's efforts at the UN," with many feeling that the "the Liberals had betrayed Britain in its hour of need" (170); this, however, is not what is remembered in Canadian public memory (171).

Granatstein has long disparaged those who "seem to accept the [peacekeeping] myth as fact", maintaining that "[p]eacekeeping was never more than a subsidiary role for the Canadian Forces" ("Canada"). He argues that it was only because "the myth appealed to Canadians" that "their

governments, [...] went along with the story” (Ibid.). The function of national myths is not to present historical fact, however. As Roland Barthes states:

Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact. (301)

The notion that myth “convert[s] history into nature” (Ball 7) is key to understanding how and why the image of Canada as a peacekeeping nation stubbornly persists in the national imaginary, both before and after the War of 1812 bicentennial. Canada’s perception of itself as a peacekeeping nation operates as a “narrative mode of nostalgia” (Jefferess 713), naturalising the practice as peaceable in and of itself, inherently benign and altruistic. It also reveals a broader impulse to dissociate war and military history from the national story. This “move to innocence” (Tuck and Yang 2012), I argue, cannot be decoupled from the country’s amnesia regarding its ongoing history of settler colonial violence.

The popularity of the narrative of Canada as a peacekeeping nation peaked in the 1990s, a period concomitant with a string of failed Canadian peacekeeping operations in former Yugoslavia (1992-1995), Somalia (1992-1995), and Rwanda (1994). Controversy surrounding these failures came not long after the announcement in 1988 by the Department of National Defence, along with the National Capital Commission, of its competition for a design for a national peacekeeping monument (Gough 209).

Unveiled in downtown Ottawa in 1992 as part of the federal commemorations celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation, it



became widely known as “[t]he world’s first monument to peacekeepers” (Kilgour). As an “architectural marker” of the capital city, this towering work is surrounded by a number of landmarks, including the National Gallery of Canada and the Notre Dame Basilica, and is in close proximity to the Parliament Buildings (Gough 210). Entitled *Reconciliation: The Peacekeeping Monument*, its plaque describes the symbolic elements of the work, captured through a tableau of three bronze figures mounted onto two converging granite walls:

Members of Canada’s Armed Forces, represented by three figures, stand at the meeting place of two walls of destruction. Vigilant, impartial, they oversee the reconciliation of those in conflict. Behind them lies the debris of war. Ahead lies the promise of peace; a grove, symbol of life. (qtd. in Ibid. 217)<sup>36</sup>

This didactic inscription, along with the dramatic image of the trio wearing berets and holding paraphernalia associated with peacekeeping activities (one figure holds binoculars at his chest; behind him is another peacekeeper with a gun slung over his shoulder, but not drawn; the third figure is a female, crouching and holding a walkie-talkie), as well as the work’s overall aesthetic representational design, casts Canada in the role of international saviour. Through the export of peacekeeping, which *Reconciliation* portrays as a morally superior and ethical tool of foreign policy, and a process wholly detached from politics and the self-interest of those who bestow it, the country is presented as committed to returning societal harmony and ushering in sustainable peace abroad.

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<sup>36</sup> For photos of the monument taken from various angles, see Gough (2002); for a single image see <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canada/reconciliation>; accessed 5 October 2016.

According to this image, Canada is a nation that does not provoke, but arbitrates. As Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (1984-1993) opined during its unveiling, the monument carves in stone “the victory of a Canadian ideal: the creation of multi-national peacekeeping forces under the UN banner” (qtd. in Fremeth 54). The story of Canada as a virtuous peacekeeper is explicitly celebrated, visually and narratively, in concrete form.

As scholar Kevin Hetherington suggests: “Identity, as well as being about identification and organisation is also about spatiality. [...]. It also means that certain spaces act as sites for the performance of identity” (105). The seat of political power in Canada, downtown Ottawa is the site from which the state is made visible and where stories of ‘the nation’ are imagined, anchored, and performed through symbolisation (Walzer 194), representing what Pierre Nora would call “*lieux de mémoire*”, a realm of collective memory (1989). It is where cultural memory is “exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms” (Assmann, “Communicative” 110); providing scattered material reference points and mnemonic traces of national narratives, where the story of Canada is made in material form, where memory as archive can be visited and touched.

Ottawa is also where national memory is made to appear consensual, where statues and monuments occupy and organise public space, crystallising selected and linear stories of progression about the country’s past. While “[m]onuments provide placeholders for sanctioned history, marking and attempting to stabilize a culture’s symbolic memory”, writes theatre and performance scholar Joanne Tompkins, “they also symbolize absence and an inability to contain signification; in addition, they are repositories of what is

not remembered, as well as what is officially celebrated” (16; see also Young 1993, 2010). Monuments, therefore, can also serve as sites of amnesia, or what Annie Gérin describes as a “condition of mnemonic promiscuity”, that is, “the evacuation of bits of inconvenient history [...] from the historical narrative it privileges” (331). Through *Reconciliation* “the state laid its imprint and controlling measure on the rhetoric of peace” (Gough 221); a rhetoric I read as masking relations of settler colonial power.

Paul Gough’s analysis of the peacekeeping monument refers to Canada’s inability to intervene in the global strife of the early 1990s, suggesting that this “transformed” the monument in the years following its unveiling from a symbol of “idealized passive intervention” to marking its “fallen status as an arbiter” (221). But his study fails to mention a critical moment in national history immediately preceding *Reconciliation*’s construction, what became to be known as the ‘Oka Crisis.’<sup>37</sup> This, I contend, forcefully called and continues to call into question both the signification of *Reconciliation* and the term ‘reconciliation’ itself.

The ‘Oka Crisis’ was the 78-day armed standoff that took place in the summer of 1990 between the Mohawks of Kanehsatà:ke and the settler peoples of Oka, a small largely Francophone town outside of Montreal, Quebec. The Indigenous protest was in response to the municipal government’s unilateral decision to expand a golf course and build new condominiums on Kanehsatà:ke territory, encroaching on a pine forest containing a 4,000-year-old burial site. In solidarity with Kanehsatà:ke and its

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<sup>37</sup> Labelled as such by much of the Canadian media, for Indigenous peoples it is more commonly remembered as the Siege/Occupation of Kanehsatà:ke or the Oka resistance.

Warriors,<sup>38</sup> Mohawks from the nearby reserve of Kahnawake erected a road blockade on Mercier Bridge, a major commuting route linking Montreal with several suburbs. While some settler Quebecois were sympathetic to the resistance, many reacted violently; at one point, throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at elders, women and children, and burning an effigy of a Mohawk Warrior strung by its neck from a lamppost, while chanting '*sauvages*' (savages) (Burelle, "Encounters" 74). As tensions escalated after the provincial police's failed efforts to dismantle the blockade, and the fatal shooting of police officer Corporal Marcel Lemay,<sup>39</sup> the federal government sent the military to intervene.

Through the national media's reporting of the heavy force used by the state in an attempt to suppress the Indigenous resistance, the story of Canada as "the peaceable kingdom", writes scholar Amelia Kalant, was "rocked" (1). However, as Kalant and others have documented (see York and Pindera 1991) the general focus of the national and international coverage was not on issues of treaty rights or systemic racism, but on presenting the protest as a law and order issue to be seen through the lens of criminality, with the Mohawks as the adversarial and instigating party, and as a threat to private property.

This narrative is embedded in a photograph entitled "Face to Face," which has become the defining image of the standoff.<sup>40</sup> Captured at the height

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<sup>38</sup> See Kalant (185-189) for background on the Mohawk Warrior Society.

<sup>39</sup> The coroner's report concluded that the bullet that led to his death came from the Mohawk side of the barricade. Another casualty of the standoff was Mohawk elder Joe Armstrong, who was hit in the chest by a rock thrown by a settler rioter; dying days later as a result of heart failure.

<sup>40</sup> To view the photograph see <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/reflections-of-oka-stories-of-the-mohawk-standoff-25-years-later-1.3232368/one-photograph-shaped-how-everyone-saw-the-oka-crisis-1.3232786>; accessed 11 September 2016.

of the conflict by journalist Shaney Komulainen, it is a tightly framed close-up of two men engaged in a tense face-to-face confrontation; neither is looking at the camera. On the left is a youthful-looking non-Indigenous private, Patrick Cloutier, from the Royal 22e Régiment of the Canadian Forces, who wears a camouflage helmet and combat fatigues. On the right is an Indigenous protestor, standing a few centimetres taller than the soldier. Anishinaabe Brad Larocque leans in; his face is covered by sunglasses, a hat, and a bandana, while an assault rifle hangs off his left shoulder. Cloutier, his face exposed, looks up and returns the Warrior's gaze.

When contemplating this image, I am reminded of Judith Butler's discussion of 'the frame' as an active attempt to structure and control what is and what is not seen (2010). She explains that "the frame is always throwing something away, always keeping something out, always de-realizing and delegitimizing alternative versions of reality, discarded negatives of the official version" (*Frames* xiii). What we see in "Face to Face" is an equality of power relations; while both men are armed, the Warrior is the only one shown with a gun. The state is presented as protecting settler victims from Indigenous anger and militancy. What we do not see, however, is what is taking place outside of the frame: "4,000 soldiers with more than a thousand vehicles, tanks, Grizzlies [armed personnel carriers], helicopters, trucks, artillery pieces, and other equipment" were brought into Oka and Châteauguay (Firsthand, "The Oka"); a deployment for "60 people behind the barricades at [Kanehsatà:ke]: 27 aboriginal men, 16 aboriginal women, a teenager, six children and 10 reporters" (Stanton 49). Here the frame displays a criminalisation of the Mohawks in defending their land.

A similar narrative was presented by the then Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, who declared as the conflict unfolded that “[t]he Mohawks are terrorists and Canada does not negotiate with terrorists” (qtd. in Burelle, “Encounters” 3). As Julie Burelle observes, with this utterance, “Quebec and Canada suddenly became the invaded parties” (Ibid.). It is Indigenous peoples, not settlers, who are positioned as “space invaders” (Puwar 2004). Alongside Mulroney’s statement, “Face to Face” tells a story of lawlessness, one that legitimises the excessive and brutal force of the Canadian government used against the peoples of Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawake, and ignores the assertion of Indigenous sovereignty that poses an implicit threat to the settler colonial order. As Pauline Wakeham writes:

Lurking behind this projection of the rhetoric of terror onto Indigenous peoples, [...] is what might be called the ‘real state of terror’ for settler societies - the pervasive fear that settler-invaders’ illegitimate claims to territorial possession and state sovereignty might be held to account in structural, economic terms. (8)

The portrayal of the protests at Oka as an act of terrorism was an attempt to justify the state’s claim to Indigenous lands, neutralising the violence with which this project was enacted. As Burelle states, “[t]o recognize Mohawk’s rights to defend their land would amount to admitting that Quebec and Canada’s imagined communities are indeed ongoing settler colonial states” (“Encounters” 7). The so-called ‘Oka Crisis,’ like the Idle No More protests discussed in Chapter 2, was not a momentary ‘crisis’ at all. It was an act of resistance rooted in the hundreds of years of history during which the state has abrogated Indigenous rights through its colonial drive to dispossess

Indigenous peoples of their lands; a national project that the myth of settler Canadian benevolence obfuscates.<sup>41</sup>

This refusal to acknowledge the contradictions of the peacekeeping mythology that were exposed during the violent clash at Oka illuminates the variegated strands of settler Canada's self-imposed amnesia of its "bloody history of dispossession and colonization" (Razack, *Dark* 146). "Face to Face," like Mulroney's 'terrorist' statement, can be seen as obscuring how a country that prides itself as an international negotiator bringing reconciliation to the world can refuse to confront its own treaty obligations to share the land.

This is especially apparent once we consider that the *Reconciliation* memorial project commenced one year after the confrontation at Oka had come to an end, and that it was Mulroney who inaugurated the monument in 1992. Instead, by clinging on to the affective force that the peacekeeping mythology maintains, that "[p]eacekeeping may be about *doing* good, but is also about *feeling* good" (Ankersen 98; italics in original) about being Canadian, the state disavowed its uncomfortable colonial past and present. In its place, the Government of Canada created a monument attempting to secure the myth of Canadian benevolence in the national imaginary.

This narrative continued to be played out one year after the formal dedication of the *Reconciliation* monument in Ottawa, albeit in a different geographical setting and context: the Canadian peacekeeping mission in Somalia in 1993, during which members of the Canadian Forces were found to

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<sup>41</sup> The protests successfully halted the proposed condominium development and golf course expansion, but the area remains part of ongoing land-claim negotiations. The standoff came at a heavy cost for many of the 1,500 residents of Kanehsatà:ke. A 2005 study found that the state's violent response "had immeasurable psychological, behavioural, physical and emotional effects on all community members, including children" (Nelson and Bonspiel-Nelson 533; see also Monchalin 218-220).

have committed acts of brutality and murder. I include this in my analysis as it offers another exemplary case as to how ‘the nation’ stories itself is based on a constant process of erasing violence from the national memory.

In March 1993, during the Canadian Forces’ deployment to Mogadishu as part of the US-led UN mission ‘Operation Restore Hope,’ two unarmed Somalis were shot in the back by Canadian peacekeepers, with one fatally wounded. Two weeks later, Shidane Abukar Arone, a Somali teenager alleged to have broken into the military compound of the Canadian Airborne Regiment to pilfer food, was killed. After finding him hiding in a portable toilet, two members of the Regiment proceeded to torture Arone “using their fists, their boots, a baton, a metal rod, and cigarettes”, recording his eventual death with a series of ‘trophy photos’ (Whitworth 85). While an estimated 80 soldiers could hear screaming throughout the night, they did nothing to intervene. Others entered the bunker and witnessed the torture of Arone, but the extreme acts of violence did not register as anything out of the ordinary, and they returned to their tent and went to sleep (Razack, *Dark* 97-98). As he lapsed in and out consciousness during his ordeal, which lasted several hours, Arone reportedly cried out “Canada, Canada”; scholar Sandra Whitworth suggests that “[t]he [peacekeeping] myth had been sold so well that even a sixteen-year-old Somali shepherd, murdered by those who were supposed to be its exemplars, apparently believed in it” (85). Knowledge of Arone’s gruesome murder on 16 March became public in Canada weeks later, with



further information surfacing through the federal government's sanctioned Somalia Commission of Inquiry (1995-1997).<sup>42</sup>

Although the 'Somalia Affair' brought the military into disrepute, Sherene Razack argues that Canada's "national dream of innocence" as a peacekeeping nation, with its compassionate 'White Knights' alleviating human suffering in Third World nations, was only momentarily paused (*Dark* 119). What took place in Somalia was presented in Canada - whether in the public investigations, the national press, or bipartisan political rhetoric - as an isolated event; abuse attributed to a "few bad apples" (Ibid. 6). But as this narrative circulated, Razack (2004; 2007) observes, in popular culture the trauma experienced by the victims of this violence was being supplanted by stories of the trauma of peacekeepers.

Razack traces process in relation to Canada's peacekeeping mission to Rwanda and the aftermath of its 1994 genocide, citing the example of Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, who made repeated failed appeals to the UN Security Council for the deployment of troops to prevent the slaughter. In Canada, Dallaire's account of his own trauma became increasingly known through documentary films, through national coverage, his memoir *Shake Hands with the Devil* (2003), and a film adaptation of the same name, released in 2007. Razack does not question the authenticity of Dallaire's trauma, but she does suggest that with the Canadian public's collective identification with

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<sup>42</sup> The Inquiry not only revealed details of Arone's murder, as well as further indiscriminate acts of violence against Somalis, but it also emerged that there was subsequent destruction and altering of evidence from military officials. For an examination of the cover-up, the Inquiry's report, and the politics of the commissions' high-profile proceedings see Razack (2004). In the end, seven members of the Force were charged for Arone's murder. One soldier was convicted of torture and manslaughter. Another was charged with second-degree murder and was found mentally unfit to stand trial after suffering severe brain damage following a suicide attempt while in custody. For the shootings that took place days before the death of Arone, charges were laid but it resulted in acquittals.

Dallaire as a national humanitarian hero, “[h]is goodness becomes our goodness” (“Stealing” 383). In contrast, the trauma experienced by survivors in Somalia and Rwanda was marginalised and, increasingly, forgotten. Through this process, she posits that “Canadians ultimately stopped the torture of Somalis from penetrating the national consciousness. Few Canadians remember the Somalia Affair as Canada’s Abu Ghraib” (“From” 380). Racism was made to disappear from the national imaginary; the moral self-image of Canada as a place of tolerance and innocence was restored.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the fact that the ‘Somalia Affair’ precipitated the country’s decline of its participation in UN peacekeeping missions - in 1991, Canada contributed approximately 10 per cent of all troops to the UN, more than any other country, but by 2007 its involvement dropped to less than 0.1 per cent (Valpy) - the myth continued to be nationally commemorated. In 1995, *Reconciliation* was featured on a coin, and in 2001, a 10-dollar bill was issued bearing the image of a female peacekeeper. Referring to the theories of Michael Billig (1995), scholar Colin McCullough writes that currencies are one of the ways in which dominant national discourses and symbols are reinforced (187), and that this illustrates “how banal peacekeeping had become in Canada’s symbolic pantheon” (Ibid.). Other memorials to peacekeepers have also been erected in Canadian cities since the unveiling of *Reconciliation*, including the Peacekeeper Park in Calgary, constructed in 2004 and consisting of a Wall of Honour and a bronze statue of a peacekeeper offering a doll to a child; that same year, a Peacekeeper’s Cairn was dedicated

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<sup>43</sup> Canada, however, is not the only country to have its peacekeepers commit acts of abuse against civilian populations. See Whitworth (2004) for a study that proposes that it is hyper-militarised masculinity and ideals and myths of manhood, embedded in the practice, that is at root for “why soldiers deployed on peace operations perpetrate acts of violence” (16); both in the context of those carried out by Canada and other countries participating in UN missions.

in Winnipeg. In 2000, a one-minute beer commercial produced by Molson Breweries became a cultural phenomenon, expressing Canadianness in an affective, non-militaristic discourse that tapped into peacekeeping as a patriotic (and anti-American) sentiment by championing “peacekeeping” over “policing.”<sup>44</sup> Cynthia Sugars notes that it quickly became a celebrated “nationalist text that performs Canada as a nation” (126).

That the various scandals following the Canadian UN missions in the 1990s<sup>45</sup> did little to destabilise peacekeeping as a mythology, in addition to the failure of the state to regard itself as a colonial oppressor in its own territorial borders in relation to the violence committed at Oka, reveals the sustaining power and endurance of this myth. But it also renders visible how it discursively operates and colludes as denial. Sociologist Stanley Cohen suggests how denial operates:

One common thread runs through the many different stories of denial: people, organizations, governments or whole societies are presented with information that is too disturbing, threatening or anomalous to be fully absorbed or openly acknowledged. The information is therefore somehow repressed, disavowed, pushed aside or reinterpreted. Or else the information ‘registers’ well enough, but its implications - cognitive, emotional or moral - are evaded, neutralized or rationalized away. (1)

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<sup>44</sup> This was part of the “I am Canadian” marketing campaign designed by the company in 1994; the commercial, known as “The Rant”, can be viewed here <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/i-am-canadian-by-molson>; accessed 5 October 2016. For critical assessments of the advertisement see E. Manning (2000); Sugars (2006); Wagman (2012).

<sup>45</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss Canada’s failed involvement in Bosnia; for this, see Ankersen (2014). As alluded to earlier, the attempt to enforce a ‘classic’ (non-armed or lightly armed UN observers) version of peacekeeping during the Canada-led UN mission in Rwanda was especially disastrous; see Melvern (2000).

I argue that what subtends the peacekeeping narrative - the aforementioned cultural texts re-inscribing this myth, the state's response to Oka, the horrific abuse that took place in Somalia, and the soldiers who placed themselves during the Somalia Inquiry as innocent bystanders to Arone's death - constitute not merely denial, but what Paulette Regan describes as "settler denial" (*Unsettling* 35). Regan argues that it is the peacekeeping myth that "lies at the heart of the settler problem", one which "remains [the] archetype of settler Canadian benevolence, fairness, and innocence in the Canadian public mind" (Ibid. 87). I will return to this notion by analysing how this archetype remained in the Conservative Party's staging of the War of 1812 bicentennial. But first I return to the reasons for Harper's selection of the War of 1812 as a means to story the 'nation.'

Canada now ranks 68<sup>th</sup> out of 124 countries in terms of the number of troops committed to ongoing UN peacekeeping missions (MacKinnon). The decline began before Stephen Harper's time in office, however Harper accelerated this process of disengagement from peacekeeping in an effort "to escape [Pearson's] shadow" (A. Cohen 3); and in displacing the Pearson model, presented Canada as a more militaristic force on the world stage. In doing so, he attempted to reverse the process of the early 1980s and 1990s, by which Canadians "fell in love with peacekeeping" and "began to fall out of love with the true purpose of a military - to be ready to fight wars" (Granatstein, *Canadian Military* 15).<sup>46</sup> Instead of portraying Canada through the image of a 'peacekeeper,' Canada was to be portrayed as being prepared to

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<sup>46</sup> In 2007, General Rick Hillier, then the Chief of Defence Staff of the Canadian Forces, famously described the 1990s as a "decade of darkness" because of the massive budgetary cuts it received from the government of Jean Chrétien (Galloway, "Hillier"; see also Granatstein, *Canadian Military* 163-198).

go to war in the name of benevolence, to bring civility, order, and stability to distant Others through the exercise of *realpolitik* (Sjolander 164).

It was during Canada's mission to Afghanistan that this shift in narrative became evident, as the image of the military as "the 'true' nature of Canadian identity" (Ibid. 152) was widely circulated in the public sphere. In late 2001, Canadian troops were sent by Jean Chrétien to fight al Qaeda and Taliban militants in Afghanistan alongside the US and other NATO forces; in 2005, under Prime Minister Paul Martin (2003-2006), Canadian Forces were moved into the volatile southern province of Kandahar.

In March 2006, during Harper's first weeks in power, the Kandahar operation was renewed. Political scientist Melanee Thomas notes that after Ottawa extended the mandate, the Prime Minister's Office presented a "clear shift" in how it wanted the public to understand its military role (in *The Agenda*, "A More"). She recounts that there "was a deliberate attempt to try to reframe how we were talking about, what to that point had been discussed as a peacekeeping mission", and that it was in 2008 that the deployment was decisively described by the Harper government as a combat mission (Ibid.).

These efforts by the Conservative government to rebrand the mission can be traced back to 2006, in response to critics appealing for troops to be withdrawn from Afghanistan. Harper travelled to Canada's military base in Kandahar in 2006 to script a new version of 'The Canadian Way.' Fostered and associated with the Chrétien and Martin Liberal governments, the phrase 'The Canadian Way' communicated a positive ideological image of Canada that "emphasized diversity and official multiculturalism and the associated values of caring, sharing, tolerance, and hospitality" (Nimijean 176-177),

which encapsulated and reframed the original narrative of Canada as a peacekeeping nation. While intimating his misgivings about the “soft” and “pacifist” peacekeeping tradition (Sjolander 157), Harper evoked this same slogan at the base in Kandahar, in so doing using his opponents’ language against them and portraying his political rival as out of step with Canadian values: “[T]here will be some who want to cut and run, but cutting and running is not my way and it’s not the Canadian way” (qtd. in Nimijean 177).

Harper’s highly publicised speech, which began “laying the groundwork” (Brewster 52) for how the Prime Minister wanted Canadians to interpret their past and present through expressions of martial valour, came only weeks before the House of Commons gathered on 17 May 2006 to narrowly pass a motion (149 to 145) that would extend the operation in Kandahar. Although “between 65 percent and 85 percent of Canadians supported their country’s contribution to the war” during the earlier phases of its deployment to Afghanistan (2001-2005), Justin Massie observes that this changed dramatically following the renewal of its military mandate (102). Public support dipped as the mission quickly “became Canada’s deadliest conflict since the Korean War (1950-1953)” (Ibid. 103). After the death of 32 Canadian soldiers in 2006, the operation went from “being practically a non-issue in Canadian politics” to “a major political and media issue” (Ibid. 102-103). This shift called for a rebranding of the mission, a political imperative that became ever more pressing as the scheduled 2011 withdrawal deadline drew nearer (McKay and Swift 2012).<sup>47</sup> A narrative was needed that would

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<sup>47</sup> In 2011, the process of withdrawing Canadian troops began and in 2014 its mandate officially ended.

distract the public's attention away from the death toll of its military forces,<sup>48</sup> and divert criticism from Harper's commitment to George W. Bush's 'war on terror' (MacMillan 66).

An opportunity lay in the approaching 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the War of 1812. By reaching back and recovering a largely forgotten moment from Canadian history (J. Simpson, "Making"), the Conservative Party had the opportunity to produce a clean slate, one that could help respond to contemporary challenges in three keys ways.

First, it would help advance Harper's "marginalization of peacekeeping as a Canadian ideal" (McKay, "Empire"), by encouraging citizens collectively to re-imagine Canada's past through a distant military exploit, and in so doing to help re-orient Canadians towards conservatism. Secondly, it would give historic meaning to Canada's presence in Afghanistan; if Canada was perceived as a country "created by wars, defended by soldiers, and kept free by patriotic support of military virtues" (McKay and Swift xi), if war is intrinsically part of Canadian identity, then questions and criticisms regarding the mission's justification, its success or failure, are more easily deflected (Ibid.). Informing the Conservative Party's War of 1812 narrative, and its accompanying performances of memory and nation, was a third element: the upholding of the colonial present through the telling of a story showcasing settlers and Indigenous peoples fighting together against the US and in defence of Canada; ultimately, it is a narrative that performs a claim to settler sovereignty on Indigenous lands.

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<sup>48</sup> A total of 158 Canadian soldiers died in Afghanistan. This tally does not include the 54 soldiers who committed suicide after returning from their deployment (D'Aliesio).

The Conservative Party's rebranding of Canada as seen through the War of 1812, designed to reveal the country's supposed moral authority as gained from past military exploits, speaks to Eric Hobsbawm's contention that "all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator" (12). It is a political tactic and strategy identifiable in an interview with Harper conducted by Kenneth Whyte, editor-in-chief of *Maclean's Magazine*, after the Conservative Party secured a majority national government in 2011.<sup>49</sup> The interviewer enquired about a remark Harper had made weeks earlier at the Conservative Party's convention, in which he defined Canada not as a dedicated peacekeeper, but as a "courageous warrior" (Harper). Harper explains:

I'm not dismissing peacekeeping, and I'm not dismissing foreign aid - they're all important things that we need to do, and in some cases do better - but the real defining moments for the country and for the world are those big conflicts where everything's at stake and where you take a side and show you can contribute to the right side. (Ibid.)

As Roland Paris notes, the narration of Canada promoted here is "a Manichean vision of international relations as a struggle between good and bad, and of moral clarity as the greatest asset and most reliable guide to foreign policy" ("What"). Through this exchange, Harper is also able to dovetail his foreign policy with the story of the War of 1812, by creating a sense of continuity from the past into the present with his description of the country's historic commitment to be "on the right side of important conflicts" (Harper). It is a commitment that reaches back past the Cold War, World War

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<sup>49</sup> The Conservative Party formally announced its plans to stage the bicentennial in 2010.



II, and World War I, all the way to the War of 1812, which, Harper claims in the same interview, “essentially began to establish our sense of national identity” (Ibid.).

When Canadians waved the national flag, another symbol associated with the Liberal Party,<sup>50</sup> Prime Minister Harper appeared to hope that they would be reminded that it was really the War of 1812, associated with the Conservative Party, that “made Canada” (Government of Canada, “On the Occasion of the Announcement”). The War of 1812 was promoted as the “leading story in Canada’s creation myth” (Allemang); it was a narrative that would establish an identifiable Canadian identity, and offer a story that would further entrench Harper’s narrative of Canada as a country without an ongoing colonial history (see Introduction). It would also express martial national values, give a common purpose for the present, encourage an emotive bond to ‘the nation,’ and chart out a Canadian future that enjoyed a contrived continuity with its conferred heroic past.

Although Harper asserts in his interview with Whyte that he was “not dismissing peacekeeping” by narrating Canada as a “courageous warrior”, I will demonstrate how the various activities and policies of the federal government suggest that this was not, in fact, the case in practice. But before offering this analysis, I offer some historical context regarding the War of 1812 itself.

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<sup>50</sup> Voted in 1964 under Pearson, the national flag consists of a red maple leaf at its centre, against a white background, with two red bands on each side (also the colours of the Liberal Party). While there are reports that “Conservative strategists have long been bothered by the fact that the rival Liberal Party owned the flag” (Chase, “Myth”), Harper did not change its design. However, it is important to mention that an intensified “new brand of patriotism” via the national flag had commenced during his time in power (Taber). For example, in 2012 a law was passed making it a crime for someone to stop another person from displaying the Canadian flag, with possible punishment including a two-year prison sentence (Fitzpatrick, “Canadian”).

## **Making the War of 1812 Story**

Because the federal government invested in “the pedagogical practice” of teaching Canadians “about the nation, its relationship to the world, and one’s role as a citizen and national subject” (Mackey, *House* 72) during the War of 1812 bicentennial, it is important to isolate what was actually being taught in this nationwide history lesson. We need not only to recognise what was and was not factual, but also to consider how, as Norman Denzin writes, “pedagogical practices are always moral and political. The political is always performative. The performative is always pedagogical” (“Critical” 18).

The War of 1812 did, of course, happen. But the commemorations reduced the conflict to a simplistic story of collaboration between Anglo/British, French-Canadian, and Indigenous allies, all of whom are presented as readily taking up arms to fight for Canada. Historian Margaret MacMillan characterised the Conservative Party’s sweeping War of 1812 narrative as promoting “[b]ad history”, in that it “tells only part of complex stories”, “ignores awkward facts that do not fit”, and “claims knowledge that it could not possibly have” (36). Through an attempt to draw a direct line from this series of battles to the present, the war is retroactively organised and modified in order to create the “appearance of seamless continuity” (Zerubavel 33). Time is presented as linear and the creation of Canada is given a teleological structure, while national identity is essentialised and circumscribed as consensual; the past is given “a blissful clarity” (Barthes 143).

Yael Zerubavel identifies this process as the making of a “*commemorative time*”, in which “the commemorative narrative creates its

own version of historical time as it elaborates, condenses, omits or conflates historical events” (9; italics in original). By selecting specific “*turning points*” in a nation’s history, a straightforward story of survival and national destiny can be constructed, as there is no “gradual process of transition” for which to account. Zerubavel suggests this “highlights the ideological principles underlying the master commemorative narrative” (Ibid.; italics in original).

I will now consider some of the ideological principles underpinning the Conservative Party’s bicentennial project, by addressing the historical context and political circumstances surrounding the War of 1812 itself. This is a complicated and dense history, and I will only be able to provide a brief overview. I will then unpack the implications of the federal government’s attempt to impose order on this chaotic event. I am guided here by the historiographical praxis offered by Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) in his analysis of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), in which he emphasises that power is deeply embedded in history making; delineating which stories get told, which are forgotten, and which are made silent. Observing that “facts are not created equal: the production of traces is always also the creation of silences” (*Silencing* 29). By calling attention to which turning points are selected by the state, we can further understand how the Conservative Party took on an active role as more than just a narrator, but as an authoritative agent attempting to control, disseminate, and produce specific meaning for this reinterpreted history shaped by and remembered through the demands of the present.

Historian Alan Taylor argues that the reasons for the US declaring war on the UK in 1812 can be explained through the “*combination* of three

causes”: America’s leaders opposed the British Orders in Council, measures which restricted its commerce and maritime trade; they were angered by the British practice of impressments, in which the British raided and forced unwilling sailors into the Royal Navy, as well seizing their ships; and, desirous of expanding into Indigenous-held regions, they were irritated by the British-Indigenous Alliance, which supported resistance to American encroachment into Indigenous homelands (411; italics in original).

Taylor contends that the oft-quoted contemporary explanation that the War of 1812 was a battle for national identity is misleading. He argues that the war was neither fought between two central opposing forces, nor was it about or for national liberation. It was a civil war, carried out and across “a borderland of mixed peoples” who “crossed boundaries in geography and identity” (Ibid. 7). It was also an “ideological competition” that “blurred the national boundaries and political identities in North America” (Ibid. 8), pitting families and communities, both settler and Indigenous, against one another. Americans in the US fought Americans who moved to Upper Canada (Ibid. 8-9);<sup>51</sup> Irishmen who had moved to the US found themselves fighting against Irishmen recruited into British regiments (Ibid. 9). French-speaking inhabitants in Lower Canada participated, but only reluctantly as they still resented the Crown for conquering New France in 1759, and joined in order to protect their Catholic faith, language, and French civil law, which was guaranteed by the British in 1774 (Ibid. 16).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See Daniel Coleman (2006) for how in the field of literature, the Loyalist myth (Loyalists were American colonists who moved to Upper Canada at the end of the American Revolutionary War in the 1780s, and remained allegiant to the British Crown) has shaped English-Settler Canadianness.

<sup>52</sup> Sean Mills (2005) argues that scholars examining French-Canadian contributions to the War of 1812 have neglected to examine how Lower Canada initially responded. He documents a

Indigenous communities were split between the Republic and the Empire. Some nations sided with the British, persuaded by the promise of a buffer zone, while others allied with the US. Others still, initially declaring neutrality, would later declare loyalty to one or other of the two states (A. Taylor 414; AFN, “*Assembly*” 10). As scholar Rick Hill (Tuscarora-Mohawk) observes, “[e]ven within each [Indigenous] nation there existed divided loyalties” (“Six Nations”).

Another example of ‘bad history’ taught by the federal government during the commemorations was that it explained the creation of Canada through an unbroken temporal link between the War of 1812 and Confederation. Harper declared throughout the bicentennial that “[t]he War of 1812 was a seminal event in the making of our great country” and that it “laid the foundation for Confederation” (Government of Canada, “Prime”), but as Robert Talbot argues, “Canada’s constitutional evolution was a gradual, decades-long and (relatively) peaceful process”, not made in the theatre of war. Jeremy Webber notes that even with the passing of the British North America Act in 1867, Canada remained “an integral part of the British Empire, exercising very considerable self-government, but also subject to significant imperial control. There was no such thing as Canadian citizenship; Canadians were British subjects” (26-27). This story of Canada progressing swiftly from “colony to independence”, suggests Robert Bothwell, “causes problems. Not only did Canadian colonial politicians from [John A.] Macdonald to [Wilfred]

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riot that broke out in Lachine (a borough in modern-day Montreal) as a result of French-Canadians refusing to perform their militia duty. The uprising was so violent that there was fear of civil war. His investigation thus challenges the Conservative Party’s account that inhabitants from across the British Colony all rushed to defend the Crown.

Laurier not seek 'independence'; they asked nothing better than to be left alone - autonomy, not independence" ("Foreign" 19).

In the 1850s, moreover, there existed annexationist sentiment amongst both Anglo-Canadians and French Canadians who wished for Canada to become part of the US, which "was virtually a legitimate political option in [nineteenth] century Canada" (Bélanger 238). In addition, Confederation was not a project designed creating a sense of Canadianness, but rather part of a process of centralising power in the British Empire's autonomous provinces (Romney 88). Although Canada became semi-independent from the Empire in 1867, it was not until the patriation of its Constitution in 1982 that the former colony secured its political sovereignty.

These historical facts were either omitted or significantly simplified in what could be described as the government's template script for the commemorations. Expanding upon the work of J.L. Austin and his analysis of "performative utterances" (1962), Judith Butler's definition of performativity is helpful here. She understands discourse as having a reiterative power "*to produce what it names*", explaining "that this production actually always happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation" ("Gender" 112; italics in original). From Vancouver to Manitoba to Halifax, wherever a federally funded War of 1812 project was unveiled, or an announcement was issued for the upgrading of heritage sites, or at the commencement of battle re-enactments, during medal and plaque dedication ceremonies, the Conservative Party brought its message that the War of 1812 'made Canada.'

Paul Wells documents how an obsession with "message control" became "pervasive" (36) throughout Harper's years as Prime Minister, a

tendency best illustrated by the introduction of Message Event Proposals. Designed to help stage-manage all public events held by the government, the templates synchronised communication across all departments, “literally putting words in the mouths of cabinet ministers, federal bureaucrats, low-profile MPs on the barbecue circuit, and seasoned diplomats abroad” (Blanchfield and Bronskill; see also Marland 2012). For every event with reporters in attendance, officials were required to fill out the following subheadings: “Event, Event type, Desired headline, Key messages, Media lines, Strategic objectives, Desired soundbite, Ideal speaking backdrop, Ideal event photograph, Tone, Attire, Rollout materials, Background, and Strategic considerations” (Blanchfield and Bronskill). The Proposals demonstrate the lengths the Harper administration would go to ensure that the specific messages he wanted to impress upon the public would be promoted by the media. It is a process that resonates strongly with Sue Curry Jansen’s argument that “[n]ation branding is a monologic, hierarchical, reductive form of communication that is intended to privilege one message, require all voices of authority to speak in unison, and marginalize and silence dissenting voices” (134). In Harper’s efforts to rebrand Canada, the War of 1812 bicentennial provided a platform to diffuse its martial “*narrative of the nation*” (Hall 293; italics in original) through a consistent script, making the official remembrance of this history appear collectively shared, consensual, and uncontested; what Paul Ricoeur would call “repetition-memory”, a recitation that becomes automatic and thus “resists criticism” (79).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> A cursory glance at a handful of statements reveals that some form of a template script was followed. This becomes further visible when juxtaposed with Harper’s official bicentennial message, posted on the federal government’s bicentennial website, which was quoted at the

This process was extended in the government's altering of state signifiers and in its media advertising for the commemorations, both in preparation for and during the bicentennial celebrations; which became additional sites for the state to name and repeat its constructed story of national identity.

One of the ways in which the Conservative Party sought permanently to instil the War of 1812 as a national story was not only through narrativised accounts, but also by changing state iconography, which according to sociologist Göran Therborn includes “[h]istorically, name changes, of cities, streets, places, buildings, have been part of regime changes” (78). During the War of 1812 bicentennial, the Party carried out a toponymic re-shaping of the urban and state landscape, imprinting, legitimising, and institutionalising its version of a national ideology by making the War of 1812 appear in public and official recognisable forms. This is consistent with what scholar Lauren Berlant would label the making of the National Symbolic (1991). Berlant identifies repeated cultural practices and their material inscriptions as the ideological “fantasy work” (*Anatomy* 22) necessary to construct the image of a unified national identity, which binds “regulation to desire, harnessing affect to political life through the production of ‘national fantasy’” (Ibid. 5). Her use of the term “fantasy” is used to “designate how national culture becomes local - through images, narratives, monuments, and sites that circulate through personal/collective consciousness” (Ibid. 5) which, she observes, “transforms individuals into subjects of a collectively-held history”(Ibid. 20), and thus “provide[s] an alphabet for a collective consciousness or national subjectivity”

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beginning of the chapter. For comparison, see G. Brown (“Harper Government”); *Marketwired* (“Harper Government”).



(Ibid.). In the context of the Conservative Party's commemorations for the War of 1812, this alphabet consisted of foregrounding the symbolic representations of the British monarchy and the military in relation to Canada.

As part of this process, iconography with Conservative associations, previously overhauled by the Liberals in the 1960s, were restored in the lead-up to the War of 1812 bicentennial. According to conservative historian C.P. Champion, the 1960s were a period in which "a bloodless coup d'état by neo-nationalists, overthrowing a symbolic order grounded in centuries of history" (165) took place. Champion documents how a year after Progressive Conservative leader John Diefenbaker lost the 1963 federal election to Lester Pearson, he wrote of his grievance "that the Liberals were 'a government determined to bring down all of our traditions'" (qtd. in Ibid. 3). As scholar Phillip Buckner notes, Diefenbaker's project of embracing "a sense of shared ethnicity and values between the British in the mother country and the British in the dominions overseas" was severed by the Liberals, who aimed to institutionalise a new, distinct Canadian national identity (7).

This can be traced back even further, however, to the aforementioned Suez Crisis in 1956, which as Robert Bothwell points out, "marked a transition between two stages of Canadian history. That year, Canada left behind a world where Great Britain dominated Canada's political universe, and launched on an uncertain course of self-definition and self-realization", through the practice of peacekeeping ("Foreword" xi). It was in the context of this event that Britishness became increasingly framed by the Liberals as "a form of subservience that inhibited true autonomy and arrested national maturity" (Champion 35). During this period "a significant number of British-looking

identifiers of the federal state were replaced by what were said to be ‘truly Canadian’ symbols” (Ibid. 6). Most famously, in 1965, the Maple Leaf supplanted the Red Ensign and the Union Flag on the new Canadian flag.

As Champion notes, however, it was during the Centennial in 1967 that a non-British Canadian identity was most vigorously promoted by the Liberals. It was this “competition over differing interpretations of Canadian nationalism” (163), which had consumed political debates from the last 1950s and into the 1970s, that returned under Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The War of 1812 would become another example of a “bipartisan extravaganza” (Bumsted qtd. in Mackey, *House* 71), in which Canada’s two principal political parties would accuse one another of manipulating history for ideological purposes.

Harper, the so-called son of “the Diefenbaker Vision”, rehabilitated and reclaimed an image of a British Canada (*National Post*, “Son”). He would symbolically reinforce the imperial tradition throughout his tenure by emphasising Canada’s ties to Britain. This he did through celebration of the British monarchy, which, as for Diefenbaker, was central to his conception of what it means to be Canadian.<sup>54</sup> To celebrate the monarchy was also to celebrate the War of 1812 (and vice versa), since Canada was at that time a British colony, fighting for the Crown. The undertaking of establishing these associations in the public mind was approached in small increments, with the ‘royal’ connection institutionalised through various schemes in 2011.

Three examples illustrate the government’s efforts in this regard: the navy and air force had their titles reversed to the Royal Canadian Air Force

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<sup>54</sup> Canada is a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy.

and the Royal Canadian Navy respectively (Ditchburn, “Tories”); the federal government ordered all missions, embassies, and consulates to hang portraits of Queen Elizabeth II in their buildings (Woods); and the paintings of Alfred Pellán, an artist from Quebec, were removed after almost 40 years on display at the entrance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Lester B. Pearson Building, replaced with portraits of the Queen (Ditchburn, “Baird”).

Many Canadians, both on the Left and Right of the political spectrum, were openly critical of the Conservative Party’s promotion of the vestiges of Canada’s British past. Speaking from a left-wing perspective, Ian McKay and Jamie Swift argued that the reinstating of the ‘royal’ in national iconography was bringing “a deeply meaningful symbol of whiteness, hierarchy, and authoritarian rule” into Canadian public life (288). In a perspective from Quebec, one columnist stated that “the ‘royalization’ of Canada so actively pursued by the Harper government looks like something from Mars” (qtd. in Jeffrey 342). J.L. Granatstein, perhaps the most well-known historian of the Right in Canada, also criticised Harper’s nostalgia for the Empire, arguing that “[t]he idea of rolling back the national symbols to make them more British is just loony. Who does Harper think he’s appealing to?” (qtd. in McKay and Swift 287)

There were those who did support the government’s nostalgia project, however. When members of the Party or its ardent supporters were reproached for these initiatives, the standard rejoinder, as articulated by Michael Taube, a political commentator and former speechwriter for Harper, was that their only concern was that “Canadian history [be] taught properly” (in *The Agenda*, “Stephen”). This argument was supported by C.P. Champion, who worked

from 2008-2013 as a senior advisor to a minister in Harper's Cabinet. In his study *The Strange Demise of British Canada* (2010) Champion argues that Britishness has always shaped and will always shape Canadian culture (231). Addressing national icons long touted as being distinctly Canadian, such as the Maple Leaf Flag, he asserts that such symbols are "steeped in the British legacy" (226). Champion posits his analysis not just as a corrective to claims that the 1960s witnessed a sharp break with the Empire, but maintains that Canada's ties to the monarchy should be celebrated.

The official War of 1812 bicentennial was framed within this same optic, which restored a symbolic order of a monarchical vision of Canada undone after Diefenbaker left power. The Conservative Party's attempt to engender a "return to national symbols and myths" (Boym 41) of a British past is what Svetlana Boym terms acts of "restorative nostalgia", which, she explains, "does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition" (xviii). Unlike "reflective nostalgia", which "can be ironic and humorous" and "reveals that longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another" (49-50), she asserts that "[r]estorative nostalgia takes itself dead seriously" (49). This typology is useful in helping to think through the political logic underpinning the Conservative-led War of 1812 bicentennial, which I see as a nostalgic project attempting to explicitly restore the Empire in the official story of Canada and with it, conservative values.

Throughout Harper's time in office, but especially during the government's militaristic narration of the War of 1812, there was an explicit emphasis on political rhetoric and federal financial resources devoted to

reinforcing a patriotic public commitment to the Canadian Armed Forces.<sup>55</sup> It is worth listing here some of the domestic military initiatives, official and community-based campaigns, which the Party directly sanctioned or supported either outside of or directly in regards to the state's commemorations of the War of 1812 bicentennial.

In 2012, the 'Canadian Forces' were renamed the 'Canadian Armed Forces,' in an attempt to "remind Canadians that their soldiers carry guns" (Berthiaume). Under Harper, there was a (political) "exhumation of Diefenbaker", which as one commentator points out, "demonstrates another way that the Conservatives have attempted to take the spotlight off Pearson: by redirecting it onto one of their own party patriarchs" (Staring). This was carried out through various projects, including the 2011 renaming of a neighbouring building to the Pearson Centre "after Pearson's bitter foe, John Diefenbaker" (Ibid.). As financial support was increasingly withdrawn, the Pearson Centre, established in 1994, which was "the flagship of the nation's commitment to UN peacekeeping", was forced to close its doors in 2013 (Dorn, "Canada").

Also in 2013, Harper announced the spending of 45 billion dollars on new heavy artillery, although this was later withdrawn in a rare reversal (Chase, "Ottawa Officially"). Army personnel were granted prominent positions at citizenship ceremonies (Friesen). A new citizenship handbook was introduced in 2009, which documents, as McKay and Swift observe, "that

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<sup>55</sup> When Harper left office in 2015, his record revealed a gulf between rhetoric and reality, as "defence spending [was reduced] to just 1% of GDP - the lowest level in Canadian history" (Byers). Soldiers and veterans were increasingly vocal in their criticism of the Prime Minister, specifically regarding his perceived failure in providing support for soldiers returning with mental health problems, the sidelining of the issue of high suicide rates, the removal of pensions, and meagre disability benefits (Dinshaw; Ivison).

Canada, past and present, is centrally about *war*"; “[p]eacekeeping is not *entirely* overlooked. It gets an entire half-sentence” (Ibid. 15-16; italics on original). A stretch of highway was renamed in 2007 as ‘Highway of Heroes.’ It marks the journey on which caskets of soldiers are taken from the airbase in Trenton to the coroner’s facility in Toronto (*Toronto Star*, “Stretch”). The administration also invested in lavish military displays in Ottawa (Fitzpatrick, “Honours”).

In 2012, the Canadian Mint released a new 20 dollar bill with an image of the Vimy Memorial in France. The banknote had previously depicted an iconic sculpture created by Indigenous artist Bill Reid of a vessel crowded with mythic creatures and beings, drawn from legends and oral histories from the Haida Nation, entitled *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii* (1991).<sup>56</sup> Its replacement encapsulated perfectly the replacement of Indigenous history and culture with a history celebrating a militarised, Europeanised story of the nation-state, reflecting what Henry A. Giroux identifies as the “militarization” of daily life:

Militarization suggests more than simply a militaristic ideal - with it[s] celebration of war as the truest measure of the health of the nation and the soldier-warrior as the most noble expression of the merging of masculinity and unquestioning patriotism. It suggests an intensification and expansion of the underlying values, practices, ideologies, social relations, and cultural representations associated with military culture.

(qtd. in McCready “Militarization” 68)

As Lyn Spillman argues in her study of Australian and American bicentennials, such large-scale cultural events are “rather elaborate sets of

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<sup>56</sup> For an image of the sculpture, see <http://www.billreidfoundation.ca/banknote/spirit.htm>; accessed 10 October 2016.

responses to a sentence completion test: ‘What characterizes my nation is...’”

(11). Harper’s use of the bicentennial, in addition to all the other initiatives that I have described, leaves little doubt that his intention was for Canadians to think of their country as a warrior nation.

A key public performance of the Conservative Party’s signalling its redirection of Canada’s official national narrative from that of a peacekeeping nation to that of a warrior nation took place in 2014, when the National Capital Commission and the Department of Canadian Heritage unveiled a new War of 1812 monument in downtown Ottawa. The work “has direct views of and a symbolic connection to the National War Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and The Valiants Memorial,” the publicity material for its competition announces, “all of which mark major conflicts in Canada’s history. This link with other military commemorations was an important factor in the final choice of the site” (Government of Canada and National Capital Commission).<sup>57</sup> The War of 1812 monument is thus firmly situated and tethered to a larger military narrative of national history in this cultural landscape. Crucially, while the peacekeeping monument sits much further back in the larger scenic environment of the Parliament Buildings, the War of 1812 monument, entitled *Triumph through Diversity*, is erected on a much more central site, on the lawn of Parliament Hill and in front (the southeast corner) of the East Block building. It also stands adjacent to Confederation Boulevard, symbolically buttressing the narrative that the War of 1812 ‘laid the foundation for Confederation.’

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<sup>57</sup> For photos of the monument, see <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1443025436159>; accessed 12 October 2016.

Because the boulevard is part of a system of ceremonial routes that, as the National Capital Commission states, “foreign dignitaries and the Royal Family take for processions and state visits” (“Confederation”), its location also illustrates subtly Canada’s ties to the monarchy. The peacekeeping and War of 1812 monuments, and the stories they narrate are definitively spatially, and temporally, separated; although both are placed along this expansive route, the East Block building visually obstructs this connection. This latest installation of a state monument illustrates how downtown Ottawa performs as a “discursive realm” through what Duncan Bell terms a “mythscape”, which he describes as “the page upon which the multiple and often conflicting nationalist narratives are (re)written; it is the perpetually mutating repository for the representation of the past for the purposes of the present” (66).

*Triumph through Diversity* features seven bronze figures standing together in a tightly clustered circle on a granite base. Each of the two-metre-tall figures are arrested in motion: an Indigenous warrior crouches and points into the distance, a British regular fires a musket, a sailor pulls a rope, a member of the Voltigeurs Regiment (an infantry unit from Lower Canada, modern-day Quebec) has his arm bandaged by a woman, a Métis soldier fires a cannon, while a member of the Canadian militia has his arm high in the air, as if to announce a military victory against the invading American troops. At its inauguration, Shelly Glover, former Heritage Minister, stated that “[t]his new landmark [...] will forever remind us of the courage and bravery of those who served and successfully defended their land in the fight for Canada more than 200 years ago” (qtd. in *Ottawa Citizen*, “War of 1812”).



Indeed, *Triumph through Diversity* is a highly visible material artefact, not only showcasing to foreign tourists that this is the official story of Canada, but also directing its main audience - Canadians, including politicians and others who walk past this work to get to Parliament - to their attributed cultural memory, serving as a daily reinforcement of this invented tradition. If the earlier-quoted studies suggest that the influence of the bicentennial will not be long lasting, the project has left an indelible mark on the topographical landscape of Canada.

In an interview with reporters, Adrienne Alison, the Toronto sculptor who won the competition to design the monument, claimed that “it’s bronze, so it will last forever” (qtd. in *Ottawa Citizen*, “War of 1812”). However, although monuments create “the illusion” of permanence, scholar James Young argues that “neither the monument nor its meaning is really everlasting. Both a monument and its significance are constructed in particular times and places, contingent on the political, historical and aesthetic realities of the moment” (“Memory” 80). This emphasis on the notion of the work lasting forever renders visible a technique of narrative power and charged ideology; not only will the monument in its material form, but also in the story it embodies, ostensibly “last forever”, according to its creator, the stories it is encouraging Canadians to forget will also, so to speak, be *lost* forever.

The story transmitted by *Triumph through Diversity* is one of collaboration: of diverse peoples coming together ‘to fight for Canada.’ Crucially, however, as discussed in the Introduction and as will be further examined later, this monument sits on unceded Indigenous territory. In claiming and taking up this space, I understand this work as performing a

colonisation of Indigenous experiences of the War of 1812, their present-day relationships with this history, and with the land itself. This is a story that legitimises the nation-state and its ongoing violent settlement of Indigenous lands; to develop this argument, I now turn to analyse the federal government's 1.3 million dollar advertising campaign, "The Fight for Canada."<sup>58</sup>

### **"The Fight for Canada" Production**

Resembling a trailer for a clichéd action film, "The Fight for Canada" (2012) is a standalone promotional advertisement that was a key part of the federal government's marketing and media campaign for the anniversary.<sup>59</sup> Just over one minute long, the fast-paced commercial attempts to summarise the history of the war, generating a feeling of excitement and anticipation for the commemorative events. With an epic plot line, rapidly changing camera angles, sudden scene changes, and intense close-ups of faces, the drama of "The Fight for Canada" unfolds over a musical score of metallic percussion and shrill strings. The first shot shows American sailing ships in the distance, sitting on murky water and under ominous clouds. The scene cuts abruptly to an anxious Laura Secord<sup>60</sup> running through a darkened forest with her cape fluttering behind. A male narrator with a deep, hoarse voice introduces the

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<sup>58</sup> Email exchange with Daniel Larabie, Senior Director, Special Projects, National Events and Commemorations, Canadian Heritage, 12 September 2016.

<sup>59</sup> What took place behind the making of the advertisement further reveals Harper's micromanagement of the bicentennial; see Chase and Leblanc. The commercial can be viewed here, <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1432061707907/1435320792485>; accessed 5 October 2016.

<sup>60</sup> The commercial does not explain why Secord is darting through tree branches. It assumes that its Canadian audience will recall the famous tale of her 32 km journey from Queenston to Beaver Dams in 1813 to warn the British of an imminent American attack. The commercial thus builds on an already embedded myth in popular culture that Secord's actions not only contributed to the colony's victory at the Battle of Beaver Dams, but 'saved Canada.' As Donald Hickey notes, however, this "is certainly an exaggeration" (*Don't* 197).

story. He begins: "Two hundred years ago..." This narration is visually interspersed with a close-up of military boots treading through a muddy field, as the narrator completes his thought, "...the United States invaded our territory." American soldiers are then shown ascending onto the water's shore, marching in lockstep in a straight line and towards the camera. Arriving on horseback, their general appears sword in hand, galloping with thick mud splashing behind him, as he positions himself in front of his troops. "But we defended our land" plays over a dramatic zoom-in of the stern face of British Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, who stands over a table with maps laid out in a candle-lit period tent. The next scene shows the troops fighting on the side of the British aligned in a field. As Brock joins his unit, this cinematic frame explains that: "We stood side by side..."

The score shifts momentarily to the trilled sounds of wooden flutes. The pan-Indian leader and Shawnee Chief Tecumseh appears with his arms crossed and nodding to Brock, as his warriors emerge from around the trees. In the next scene, Lieutenant Colonel Charles de Salaberry enters the screen with his infantry, the French-Canadian Voltigeurs. They await his order to: "Fall in!" In quick succession, the camera returns to Secord running through the forest and then cuts back to the image of Tecumseh standing stoically with his men. The voice of the narrator confidently boasts, "...and won the fight for Canada." American and British troops are then shown positioned in linear formation and at attention with their rifles. The unnamed American military leader raises his sword in the air and yells: "Ready!" The first row of his troops uniformly responds by kneeling and pointing their weapons to the opposing unit. On the other side, Brock pulls out his sword and yells: "Aim!"

Brock's troops point their weapons back towards the Americans. The music crescendos into a deafening pitch, before a suspended silent dramatic pause: the camera lingers on the profile of Brock, then on the American officer, and finally onto a close-up of the prepared muskets. The intensity reaches its climax when Brock roars the command to: "Fire!"

We hear the sound of gunshots, but are spared the violent imagery of the battle. The background of the screen turns black, and the words "[t]he War of 1812" are superimposed onto a red maple leaf and two crossed white cutlasses. Merging into the background is a four-squared illustrative rendering of the four protagonists, Laura Secord, Charles de Salaberry, Isaac Brock, and Tecumseh; the selected heroes of the bicentennial. All of this flashes and then zooms out before the caption "1812.gc.ca" replaces the illustrations. The commercial concludes with the narrator inviting viewers to: "Learn more about the War of 1812" through the official bicentennial website. We are then informed that this was: "A message from the Government of Canada" (Canadian Heritage, "1812: The Fight").

"The Fight for Canada" inaugurated the Conservative-led spectacle, which Frank Manning defines as "[a] large-scale, extravagant cultural production that is replete with striking visual imagery and dramatic action and that is watched by a mass audience" (291). The commercial reached millions of viewers through a series of platforms: it was posted on the government's official website for the bicentennial, screened in over 1800 cinemas throughout June and July 2012, broadcast on television during the London 2012 Summer Olympics, and featured in print form in *Cineplex Magazine* (Treasury Board, "Bicentennial").

In the following passages, I seek to explicate the advertisement's underlying political workings. The first layer of my analysis concerns the production's central communicated message. I suggest that this was to transmit to its viewing publics that the narrative of Canada as a global peacekeeper was being replaced by the Conservative Party in a form that would reach as many Canadians as possible. As Heritage Minister James Moore stated during the commemorations, "[w]e live in a country where so many young people aren't taught and don't know and don't have access to those stories that made this country so great and so brilliant" (qtd. in Geddes). "The Fight for Canada" signalled that the state had traded in the UN peacekeepers' iconic blue berets for nineteenth century rifles in its official story of 'the nation.' By having the commercial play on rotation on television and in cinemas, its intended effect was not only re-enforcement, but an inculcation of something that had hitherto been 'unknown' as common knowledge. Operating as an invented tradition, this new story of 'the nation' was portrayed as the preservation of a stable past, not one that had been newly constructed so as to meet the demands of the present.

The second layer of my reading turns to its "*togetherness repertoire*" (Potter and Wetherell 175; italics in original), specifically its representation of a collaborative effort between Anglo/British, French-Canadian, and Indigenous allies who are shown coming together on the battlefield, not only to repel invading American troops, but to engage in a larger fight for the defence of 'the nation.' Seen through this lens, a performance of simultaneous excess of remembering and forgetting (Ricoeur xv) is at work. This narrative suggests that Canada and Canadians have always been united,

that there have never been ethnic or racial tensions, no campaigns for provincial separatism, no gender violence, no founding settler violence, and no Indigenous resistance to the oppression of the nation-state. As alluded to previously, this narration upholds an immutable pan-nationalist Canadian identity. This is problematic because as Andrew Higson writes, it is done “at the expense of repressing internal difference, tensions and contradictions - difference of class, race, gender, religion etc.” (139); as Duncan Bell affirms “[t]here is no singular, irreducible national narrative, no essentialist ‘national identity’” (73), as “there will always be dissent” (74).

The final layer of my study of the advertisement intersects with the above analysis. “The Fight for Canada,” like *Triumph through Diversity*, presents Indigenous allies as embracing the nation-state with open arms, while settlers are cast as heroes of Canada, not as perpetrators of colonial violence. Enacting a move that “symbolically purges” (4) and performs “self-justifying fantasies that conceal the violence marking [Canada’s] origins” (Huhndorf 5) - a move that recalls the state’s justification regarding the events of Oka. This narrative operates along a continuum of settler amnesia, one that maintains the “theme of conquest through benevolence - the definition of the Canadian spirit and of the Canadian national identity through the continual assertion of history as a narrative of paternal domination of Aboriginal peoples” (Furniss, *Burden* 63).

Crucially, this was constitutive of the Conservative Party’s War of 1812 bicentennial script. For example, according to Minister Moore, “without the War of 1812, [A]boriginal Canadians would have probably seen the same future as American Indians saw” (qtd. Ditchburn, “Tories”). With this

statement, “the conquering of Indian nations and the forced settlement of Indian lands” remains firmly positioned as only “America’s origin story” (Cobb 226). This resonates with Kalant’s observation that “[i]t is still a truism amongst historians and political scientists, that in contrast to the United States, ‘in Canada a live Indian was a good Indian,’ or the lack of massacres was indicative of Canadian dedication to peace” (80). Although the War of 1812 narrative has different protagonists, is set in a different time, and in a different geographical setting than the peacekeeping myth, both operate as and recycle a mythologising of settler kindness to Indigenous peoples (Mackey, *House* 27). “The Fight for Canada,” *Triumph through Diversity*, and the *Reconciliation* function as “iconography of settler triumphalism” (Churchill qtd. in Episkenew 25).

It is for this very reason, Eva Mackay writes, that “Aboriginal people are necessary players in nationalist myths: they are the colourful recipients of benevolence, the necessary ‘others’ who reflect back white Canada’s self-image of tolerance” (15). Through this deceptive act of inclusion, the long history of Canada’s policies of assimilation and Indigenous dispossession are displaced by a nostalgic story of national unity, harmonious community cohesion, and amicable co-habitation. It is nostalgic because this is not “the past as actually experienced”, but “the past as imagined, as idealized through memory and desire” (Hutcheon 195). Specifically, this is the settler desire for the accumulation of territory and a longing for permanence on the land, a structural project predicated on Indigenous erasure, a process which Patrick Wolfe starkly calls “[t]he logic of elimination” (388). “The Fight for Canada” is therefore a performance of settler nostalgia, “a longing for a home that [...]

has never existed” and “a romantic with one’s own fantasy” (Boym xiii), a collective fantasy that the land now called ‘Canada’ never witnessed founding and ongoing settler violence.

This process is apparent in the commercial’s representation of Tecumseh as a Canadian hero. The Shawnee leader was not ‘Canadian’ (he was born in modern-day Ohio) nor did he ‘fight for Canada.’<sup>61</sup> As John Sugden writes, “Tecumseh so beloved in Canadian history, the patriot, never existed. His loyalty to the British, to Canada, was purely dependent upon their value to his own cause” (391). More specifically, Tecumseh, and his pan-Indian alliance, joined the Colony during the War of 1812 in exchange for the Crown’s promise of a broad Indigenous buffer zone, which would have crossed the Canada-US border. After the agreements were reached in the Treaty of Ghent (1815), which officially ended the conflict and restored pre-war conditions and boundaries between the US and Canada, with no territory lost or gained, a dramatic shift in Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations within British North America took place.

During the Treaty negotiations, the promise of an independent Indigenous state was dropped after American delegates rejected the proposal. With this, the strategic military partnership cultivated since the Treaty of Montreal (1701) quickly eroded (Miller, *Shingwauk’s* 62).<sup>62</sup> It was between the Treaty of 1701 and the War of 1812, J. R. Miller explains, that “[it] was

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<sup>61</sup> The “Fight for Canada” is not the first work to present Tecumseh in such terms. His co-optation by settlers is traced back to the nineteenth century by such scholars as Brownlie (2012); Carleton (2014); Filewod (2002); Hill (2013); Sugden (1997).

<sup>62</sup> The Treaty of Montreal (1701) ended, temporarily, a series of conflicts known as the Iroquois Wars/Beaver Wars that began in eastern Canada in the 1640s, which pitted Iroquois against Algonquin and Huron peoples, and their French allies, leading to over 70 years of fighting; see Havard (2001). Bonita Lawrence writes that these intertribal wars must be viewed within the context of intense competition for markets and the depopulation of fur-bearing animals (“Rewriting” 28).



precisely Natives' skills in transportation, diplomacy, and warfare that made Aboriginal warriors valuable to the various European and colonial leaders who contended for control of North America" (Ibid.). But after the threat of external conflict had subsided following the end of the War of 1812, Indigenous populations faced rapid colonial expansion of territory and increased competition for land and resources.

They had become "a liability to people who wished to reduce the forests to tidy farms, tame the rivers by means of canals to haul their goods, and develop manufacturing" (Ibid.). With the growing number of British settlers arriving in Upper Canada, Indigenous communities were increasingly forced off their lands, and "[b]y the mid-1820s, most of the colony's natives were restricted to reserves that resembled American reservations" (A. Taylor 436-437). Alan Taylor explains that "[a]ll too soon, the British forgot that the Indians had helped to save Canada from the American invasions in 1812 and 1813", adding that "a postwar myth glorified the militia and degraded the Indians" (435). It is within this context that "Britain's Indian allies in Canada had been thus transformed and reduced from warriors to wards" of the state (Allen 183).

It is also this "shift in relations that explains the effort of state and church to assimilate Aboriginal communities through residential schools" (Miller, *Shingwauk's* 62). In 1831, less than two decades after the War of 1812, a model example, the Mohawk Institute, was established in Brantford, Ontario. As Paula Whitlow, the museum director of the city's Woodland Culture Centre, observes, "[a]ll these veterans who fought and died in the War

of 1812, their reward was to have their kids sent to residential schools” (qtd. in Edwards).

This genealogy was disavowed during the official War of 1812 bicentennial for the simple reason that tracing the aftermath of the conflict to the formation of the IRS system would have been profoundly antithetical to the nation-building project. The War of 1812 story promoted by the Conservative Party was constructed upon triumphant settler myths and sustained through an active amnesia regarding Canada’s foundation upon expropriated Indigenous lands. This was practiced in part through the state’s co-option of the figure of Tecumseh, who during the bicentennial served as a vector for the federal government to endorse the narrative that Canada has “no history of colonialism” (Harper qtd. in Wherry). If, as Benedict Anderson writes, nations are “imagined communities” ([1983] 2006), in the context of Canada the colonial past and present is omitted from national imagining; it is instead forcefully silenced (Trouillot 1995). “The Fight for Canada” speaks to what Margaret Smith describes as a “twofold curse” for communities marginalised by society:

For minority groups who live with the aftermath of trauma or injustice, the prevailing narrative of the society coincides poorly with their own historical memory. These groups, therefore, live a twofold curse. First, the substantive ills that they are forced to live which are at least in part the result of their traumatic or unjust history; but second, the very account of that past that has entered the memory of the majority of people in the society erases or obfuscates their trauma.

(16)

Smith's argument is encapsulated in the "The Fight for Canada" when the voiceover intones that "we defended our land", a narrative that forcefully erases the violence behind its utterance. It was a line that reverberated in my ears as I watched the commercial from my home outside Toronto in 2012; its echo followed me to Ottawa as I travelled to attend the Canada Day celebrations.

## **Part II: (Un)Mapping the War of 1812 in the Colonial Present**

As I arrived at the 2012 Canada Day festivities in downtown Ottawa, one of the first things that caught my attention was the extent to which visual markers of the bicentennial were present on and around Parliament Hill. For example, the faces of the four protagonists from "The Fight for Canada" commercial were printed on large banners that lined Confederation Boulevard. I also witnessed the visual economy of the state's commemorative project carried and circulated by individual bodies. As I stood at the Parks Canada '1812 on Tour' kiosk, I observed a line of children, young adolescents, and a few adults waiting to get temporary tattoos. Many chose the War of 1812 tattoo, set against a squared blue background with two crossed swords behind a red maple leaf with '1812' italicised across it - the same icon that appears at the end of "The Fight for Canada." What prompted members of the public to have this official story of Canada stamped on their bodies, and what meaning was performed through this display, I wondered.<sup>63</sup>

Knowingly or unknowingly, those who volunteered to bear the War of 1812's official branding were participating in the reinforcement of the

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<sup>63</sup> Although there were several War of 1812 themed tattoos available at the kiosk, the tattoo described here was the one most identifiable with the government's bicentennial marketing campaign. However, this image was in addition to dozens of other non-bicentennial related designs that were offered by Parks Canada on Canada Day.

Conservative Party's invented tradition of Canada as a warrior nation. In branding the 'War of 1812' logo on their skin, these subjects actualised themselves as advertisements for the federal government's rebranding project. Such paraphernalia served as mnemonic tools of the federal government to further impress the importance of the War of 1812 in public memory, providing a "concrete way in which national symbols fuse the state with the nation" (Geisler xx). These 'tattooed' individuals publicly performed what Sara Ahmed identifies as the "stickiness" of national belonging (*Cultural* 91). They moved amongst and through the crowds on Canada Day with 'the nation' attached to their body, showing their sense of attachment to 'the nation,' while displaying to others that they were embodying the "ideal image of the nation" (Ibid. 133). With the 'War of 1812' temporarily inscribed on their flesh, this story of the state was "made corporeal, taken into the body" (Hurley, *National* 149), performing an affective public exercise in displaying identification with this martial national narrative of Canada.

The 1812 logo also appeared on small pins distributed at the same kiosk. Although those attending Canada Day had the option of whether or not to wear the pin, members of the Canadian Forces had no choice. Described by Peter MacKay, the former National Defence Minister, as a "tribute" and "daily reminder of a key chapter in Canada's history" (qtd. in Chase, "Canadian"), members of the Forces were instructed to wear the lapel pin as part of their uniform throughout the commemorations, until the activities officially concluded on 16 February 2015 (Pugliese). This is one of the many examples of how 'the nation,' to use Ernest Renan's phrase, performed as "a

daily plebiscite” (19) during the bicentennial. The enforced display of the pin became an act of repetition and thus an affirmation that “[t]he nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavours, sacrifice, and devotion”, reminding its subjects, namely the army, “of the sacrifices that one has made in this past and of those one is prepared to make in the future” (Ibid.).

In a telephone interview in July 2015, I spoke to Peter Moon, currently the oldest active member of the Canadian Forces, and a retired *Globe and Mail* reporter (as described in the Introduction, in 1996 he broke the story of rampant abuse at St. Anne’s residential school), about the War of 1812 pins.<sup>64</sup> Moon, who is non-Indigenous, currently serves as the Force’s public affairs specialist for Indigenous army reservists in remote and isolated communities of Northern Ontario. He responded with momentary amusement about its obligatory wearing and explained that he wore the pin “in a different context” than the Conservative Party’s narration of the War of 1812. He suggested that because this war was chiefly fought in Southern Ontario, many felt unconnected to its history in the north of the province. When someone approached him and asked about the pin, he saw it as a way of “honouring Aboriginal allies”; further explaining that he “wore it proudly up north” and saw it as an opportunity in “giving [...] a positive message to the Aboriginal people of Northern Ontario.” Although Indigenous nations that fought on the side of the British were often given only a supporting role in the official commemorations, Moon emphasised that without Indigenous

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<sup>64</sup> Moon, Peter. Telephone interview with the author. 30 July 2015.

contributions and sacrifices to the war, British North America would have utterly failed in its attempt to fend off the American troops.

Moving on from the kiosk, I walked towards the lawn of Parliament Hill and noticed an 11-by-8 metre map laid out adjacent to the main-stage. A female voice from The Royal Canadian Geographical Society was emanating from speakers, inviting the public to “walk around, check out the battles that happened and learn a little bit more about the war that changed Canada.”<sup>65</sup> Along with a few others, I took off my shoes and walked onto the large illustrated map, marking dozens of key land and water battles from the War of 1812 that took place along and beyond the Canada-US international border.

Our tour was to begin with an explanation of its legend and colour coding. “The red that represents British or Canadian forts,” “the blue represents American forts,” “you’ll notice if you look on the map, there aren’t many settlements 200 years ago. Very sparsely populated place.” We learned about the involvement of Indigenous peoples in the War of 1812, “anywhere you see feathers on the map, [...] represent Native villages. [...] In most of these Native villages in the War of 1812 they actually sided with us, with the Canadians and the British. They fought against the United States.” Standing beside me, a man chuckled: “I’m not surprised. I would of if I was Native.” Our guide suggested why this may have been so: “That was because the United States were expanding westward into Ohio. So a lot of these Native people were afraid that they were going to lose their lands. So they sided with the British.” The guide pointed to Moraviantown, the location of

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<sup>65</sup> Canada Day. Video recording from the author. 1 July 2012. Ottawa, ON.

the Battle of Thames (1813) and the site of Tecumseh's death, which resulted in the disintegration of his campaign to establish a separate pan-Indigenous territory. The tour was momentarily interrupted, as parents laughed and their children screamed when they realised that they were standing on the "wrong side" of the map - that is, they were standing 'in' America. A young girl, wearing a t-shirt with 'Canada cutie' emblazoned on the front, jumped up and down shouting: "Stomp. Stomp. Stomp." She then walked over to the Canadian side; to take Harper's words, she understood "what side of the border we live on, and which flag we salute."

In that instant, the young girl had instinctively articulated what has been long been understood as a pillar buttressing narratives of Canadian national identity: anti-American sentiment (Granatstein, *Yankee* 4).<sup>66</sup> Through this action, as well as the man who boasted that if he 'was Native' that he would have fought against the Americans in the War of 1812, the territorial map as an artefact of the archive revealed a lively embodied repertoire, divulging a cultural imagining of Canada vis-à-vis the borders and boundaries of the nation-state - that is, north of the American border is where settler benevolence is to be, naturally, found. In traversing to the 'correct' side of the map, I see a larger performance at work, one in which, as Michel de Certeau writes, "[e]very story is a travel story - a spatial practice" (115). As I argue throughout this study, the state's story of Canada operates through disciplinary

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<sup>66</sup> Throughout his tenure, including during the War of 1812 bicentennial, Harper positioned his government as 'pro-American.' As the Prime Minister stated in 2012, "[w]hat we've tried to do and tried to tell Canadians is there's no need for true Canadian nationalism to have any sense of anti-Americanism" (qtd. in MacCharles). While the peacekeeping mythology fed into anti-Americanism, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s, the War of 1812 narrative, it seems, was supposed to signal an official break from this. However, the above encounter on Canada Day suggests that anti-Americanism still informs, to some extent, how Canadians characterise national identity.

settler colonial spatial practices. In the context of the Canada Day celebrations staged on Parliament Hill, we can see this emerge by isolating a “political palimpsest” (Jestrovic 80): the map that we were walking on was sprawled across not only the site of state political power, but of ongoing Indigenous dispossession.

After touring the Canadian Geographic Education map, I witnessed a markedly different understanding of the cartographical mapping of Canada, one that called attention to how maps function as, de Certeau states, “a totalizing stage on which elements of diverse origin are brought together to form the tableau of a ‘state’ of geographical knowledge” (121).

Only a few metres away from where I was standing, I noticed a man taping posters onto the fence demarcating the barrier of the main-stage. The first placard read: “OH CANADA YOUR HOME ON STOLEN NATIVE LAND”; a subversion of the English version of the Canadian national anthem, which begins with “O Canada! Our home and native land.” His second sign declared: “Unceded Algonquin Territory.” He introduced himself as “a First Nations person”, who was “struggling with addiction” and had been “living on the streets of downtown Ottawa for eight years.”<sup>67</sup> When I asked about his signs he explained, “I love Canada, but people have to recognise this is unceded Algonquin territory.” Our conversation did not go much further.<sup>68</sup> A police officer approached and said that as a matter of regulation the signs must be promptly removed. “Well, then. You can charge me. I’m not trying to cause trouble here,” Warren replied, “I just want people

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<sup>67</sup> Canada Day. Video recording from the author. 1 July 2012. Ottawa, ON.

<sup>68</sup> The police officer intervened before I could ask Warren for his last name.



to recognise what this place is.” The officer reasoned that “if he has a sign, then other people could have signs, and that would be a problem.”

The officer’s regulation of this intervention revealed a deeper charge, an implicit accusation that even though Warren asserted “I love Canada,” he was not performing the right script, particularly on Canada Day, when the state expects - but does not always receive - certain “routines” and “extra emotions [to] be enacted” by national subjects (Billig 45). Warren was not, as Diana Taylor writes, “[d]oing one’s nation-ness [...] ‘correctly’” (*Disappearing* 92). Crucially, it is the settler ideal of Canadian nation-ness that he challenged. Taylor explains that “[n]ational [...] identity is not so much a question of being as of doing, of being seen doing”, and that “[t]his identity is forged in the public sphere - the way we see others and ourselves is key to the process of national recognition and identification” (Ibid.). Taping his signs to the barrier of the concert stage on Parliament Hill, which on Canada Day becomes the very signifier of the national stage (the main celebrations are broadcast live across Canada, while at the site thousands of individuals gather), Warren challenged the display of a synchronised consensus of national identity, enacted in this “carefully orchestrated mass spectacle” (Kruger 7). “Spectacles”, as Kahnawà:ke Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson argues, “are especially useful in settler societies because they continue to redirect emotions, histories, and possibilities away from the means of societal and historical production - Indigenous dispossession, disenfranchisement, and containment” (“Settlement’s” 206-207).

Warren’s corporeal presence, and the placards that he brought with him, were inherently problematic; these were visible reminders of the

contested grounds of the settler colonial state. It is important to consider here the political significance of Warren's sign stating that Parliament Hill sits on unceded Algonquin traditional territory. As something that settler nationals are "obliged to forget - in the construction of the national present" (Bhabha 311), this history does not feature in the settler public's national memory. The land being 'unceded' means that the Government of Canada is in violation of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which states that lands cannot be settled or developed unless "acquired by the Crown through formal treaty, cession, or purchase" through consultation with Indigenous communities (C. Harris 91). The tract of land now known as 'Parliament Hill' was expropriated from the Algonquins of Ontario, who have submitted a land claim covering nine million acres of eastern Ontario; they have been in negotiations with the Government of Canada over their claim since 1991. In her study of the contemporary land claims and self-government negotiation process between the Algonquin of Golden Lake - now the Algonquin of Pikwàkanàgan First Nation - with the Government of Canada, Lynn Gehl (Algonquin Anishinaabe) (2014) explores how the state has historically displaced and dispossessed Anishinaabe peoples through settlement of an area of territory that includes Parliament Hill and Victoria Island.<sup>69</sup> In other words, as Gehl documents, the nation's capital is the site of Indigenous genocide:

[T]he Algonquin Nation has been, and remains, a particular target of colonial Canada as our traditional territory lies at the very heart of what has become the Canadian nation state. Who my Algonquin

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<sup>69</sup> I am referring here to the Victoria Island that lies in the Ottawa River in Ottawa. Not to be confused with Victoria Island in British Columbia, Victoria Island in Ottawa was also the site for Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike in 2012 (see Chapter 2).

Anishinaabe ancestors were, and who we are today, was and remains a result of Canada's genocide. (74)

Because Warren called attention to the bicentennial's settler spectacle-ness, his protest induced the state's anxiety that the violent workings of its violent national project were to be exposed. As Tim Ingold writes, "the landscape tells - or rather *is* - a story"; "[t]o perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, [...] of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past" (59-60; italics in original). In this case, this is a past that structures the colonial present, a present that Warren brought into public view during the festivities. It is for this reason that I also understand Warren's protest as having called the "supposedly enduring materials" of the archive into question (D. Taylor, *Archive* 19), specifically the authority of the material War of 1812 map. As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin explain, "the construction of maps" are "a means of textualizing the spatial reality of the other, naming or, in almost all cases, renaming spaces in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control" (26). Maps perform as sites of power, ideology, inclusion, and exclusion, and serve as texts for settlers to claim legitimacy in occupying space (Goeman 2013). Warren's intervention, his corporeal body and his "embodied practice/knowledge" (D. Taylor *Archive*, 19) of the land as Indigenous land, troubled the myth of Canada as "*terra nullius*, or empty, uninhabited lands" before the settlers arrived and built a society from the supposed vacant wilderness (Razack, "When" 3). The scenario of the tour of the map of Canada can be read, therefore, as having "encouraged [us] to overlook the displacement and disappearance of native peoples" (D. Taylor, *Archive* 28).

Speaking from the main-stage during these Canada Day celebrations, Prime Minister Harper announced that “our ancestors in 1812 laid the [...] basis for the vision of freedom, democracy and justice that is our inheritance” (*Ottawa Citizen*, “Text”). A similar contention was made by various settler publics, that the War of 1812 had a “happy aftermath” (*Globe and Mail*, “War of 1812”). It was also narrated along similar lines at the Archives of Ontario in its exhibition *Perceptions of 1812: Identity, Diversity, Memory* (2012), discussed in the Introduction. This storyline vociferously denies Indigenous remembrances of the war. For Indigenous communities, the War of 1812 resonates with Paul Ricoeur’s observation that: “What we celebrate under the title of founding events are, essentially, acts of violence legitimated after the fact by a precarious state of right. [...] To celebration on one side corresponds execration on the other” (79). The Algonquians of Ontario Consultation Office make this association explicit, stating that for the “Algonquin warriors [who] fought beside the British during the War of 1812 [...] [t]heir reward for this service was the continued loss of their land to individual land sales and encroachment by British immigrants moving into the [Ottawa] [V]alley” (“Our Proud”). The story of the War of 1812 staged by the state, as one of national progress and social unity, fought in the name of national freedom, jars with how Indigenous peoples live with the war’s legacies, not to mention the settler colonial mapping of Canada that was celebrated during the bicentennial.

Warren deviated from the federal government’s script of celebrating “our land” as iterated in “The Fight for Canada”; phrases that are tethered to a larger discourse, as well as everyday rhetorical practices, of settler amnesia.

Michael Billig would describe ‘our land’ and the ‘the fight for Canada’ as “banal”; “prosaic, routine words, which take nations for granted, and which so doing, inhabit them”, serving as “reminders of the homeland, making ‘our’ national identity unforgettable” (93). Warren appealed, however fleetingly, to those amassed on the lawn of Parliament Hill to see the land underneath their feet as it really was - Indigenous land. By reminding settlers of the founding violence of Canada, and presenting a counter-memory and narrative of the land, Warren’s intervention performed a re-storying of Canada.

I turn now to how the War of 1812 was ‘re-presented’ in Indigenous theatre during its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary;<sup>70</sup> representing another example of an Indigenous counter-memory to the state’s War of 1812 story, illustrating that “[Canada] is not a stable place or object of analysis but a highly contested practice - physically, politically, artistically, and theoretically” (D. Taylor, “Remapping” 149).

### **Sovereign Alliances**

Commissioned by the Assembly of First Nations and performed in Toronto for the closing event of the Annual General Assembly in 2012,<sup>71</sup> *Sovereign Alliances* was written by Herbie Barnes, drawing upon the guidance and knowledge of Indigenous historical experts on the War of 1812. The play

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<sup>70</sup> Although my analysis considers an example of a work that investigated the legacies of the War of 1812 during the larger backdrop of the bicentennial, it is important to mention an example of an explicit boycott. Native Earth Performing Arts, “Canada’s oldest professional Indigenous theatre company”, chose not to take part in the bicentennial (“About”). A publicly released statement explained this decision: “2012/13 [season] brings the anniversary of a colonial war that we hereby decline to euphemistically celebrate. With respect and gratitude to those colleagues who endeavour to include the First Nations presence in their commemorative projects, Native Earth will forego the glorification of selected, sustained, government sanctioned acts of violence in honour of the undeclared wars our people continue to fight” (“2012/13 Treason Season”).

<sup>71</sup> The Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly is a national meeting in which the Chiefs of 633 Indigenous nations, or their proxies, elect a new National Chief.

unfolds through the story of three young friends, Tom (Haudenosaunee), Harry (Nishnabeg), and Sally (non-Indigenous), who come to recognise that the War of 1812 continues to shape their lives today. Before an upcoming history exam on the War of 1812, they decide to organise a road trip to attend a powwow<sup>72</sup> on the Oneida Reservation, where Tom is to receive a medal on behalf of his grandfather, who fought in the Vietnam War. At the Canada-US border, Tom is stopped for using his Iroquois passport.<sup>73</sup> After lengthy questioning by border officials, the three protagonists are finally allowed to cross and make it in time for the powwow.

My discussion of *Sovereign Alliances* focuses on this climactic moment as it reveals how more broadly, the border operates as a colonial imposition for Indigenous peoples. For Haudenosaunee peoples, it is also one from which they can refuse themselves, by refusing the state's "gift" of a Canadian passport and asserting their Indigenous sovereignty instead (A. Simpson, *Mohawk* 1). The work articulates a challenge to the Conservative Party's celebratory narrative that the War of 1812 established "what side of the border we live on, and which flag we salute" (Government of Canada, "Prime"). In making this analysis, I am guided by the work of Dwight Conquergood, who asks: "For whom is the border a friction-free zone of entitled access, a frontier of possibility? Who travels confidently across borders, and who gets questioned, detained, interrogated, and strip-searched at the border"? (33)

When we are first introduced to the three characters, Tom is driving, Sally is in the passenger seat studying from a War of 1812 textbook, and

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<sup>72</sup> Powwows are Indigenous social gatherings that are celebrations of dance, music, regalia, and handicrafts.

<sup>73</sup> In 1923 the Haudenosaunee Confederacy began issuing Iroquois passports.

Harry is reading a comic book. Sally and Tom begin to quiz each other in preparation for the test. The subject of Indigenous identity weaves into the conversation and Sally becomes confused, not knowing that Indigenous peoples belong to different nations, and not realising that her friends do not align their identity with that of the nation-state. As Tom explains: “It’s just that we are not American or Canadian. We’re Native” (Barnes 6). When Harry starts to boast about his knowledge of War of 1812 history, Sally impatiently grabs the comic book out of his hands, revealing that he was studying all along:

SALLY: Hey!! You’re reading the text book.

HARRY: What? I have a reputation to keep. Besides...the exam is on Monday and I don’t need to fail. Once this exam is over ‘history is history.’

TOM: What are you talking about? As a First Nations person history is never dead. It’s all around us. We are living breathing history.

HARRY: Riiiiight.

TOM: For real, think about it. Everything we have is ‘cause of history.

SALLY: Really?

TOM: Yeap.

HARRY: Yeap, tax free smokes, susceptibility to diabetes. I love history.

TOM: Come on Harry it’s more than that. Our forefathers fought for lots. Read that book. Look up the Jay Treaty.

HARRY: Jay Treaty!!! We're only one line in that thing. Guess what Sally? In the old days we used to be able to travel back and forth across the borders without a passport.

TOM: That still holds up!!!

HARRY: Not since 9/11. Look Tom, I'm glad you like history but us Natives don't got much anymore. Just a neat card<sup>74</sup> and high cheek bones and I heard the Government is looking for a way to take those soon too... (Ibid. 7-8)

It is important briefly to note here how the Jay Treaty relates to the history of the War of 1812. After Indigenous nations were physically separated following the imposition of an international border between Canada and the US in 1793, Article III of the Jay Treaty (1794) guaranteed the rights of Indigenous peoples living on either side to cross the border freely. During the War of 1812 these rights were suspended, but with the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent (1815) it was restored. Despite the provision outlined in the Treaty, Indigenous peoples continue to fight to this day to have these inherent rights recognised.<sup>75</sup> These rights are inherent because as the Mohawk Council of Ahkwesáhsne explains: "The Jay Treaty is not a Treaty with Aboriginal Peoples and it is not a Treaty which *gives* [...] border crossing rights to the First Nations People. It is however, a Treaty which *confirms* [...] those rights" (qtd. in White 49; italics in original). More specifically, these "include the right to work, hunt, fish, and trap on either side; to carry sacred objects and

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<sup>74</sup> Referred to here is a status card, a form of government identification, identifying an individual as a Status India; see Terminology.

<sup>75</sup> The specific meanings set forth in the Jay Treaty have been repeatedly debated by the courts, and have resulted in a string of inconsistent rulings. For an analysis of the history of Haudenosaunee peoples fighting against such barriers presented by Canadian and US courts, see A. Simpson (2014); White (2015).



personal goods without paying duties; and to engage in commerce within tribal territories without interference of laws and regulations” (Sadowski-Smith 88).

In the context of *Sovereign Alliances*, the significance of this Treaty is questioned when Tom, Harry, and Sally arrive at the border and hand over their passports to the security officials. After Tom gives his Iroquois passport, the guard begins to question his documentation:

GUARD: What’s this?

TOM: My passport.

GUARD: I need a real passport.

TOM: That is one.

GUARD: I beg your pardon.

TOM: I am Haudenosaunee. Native. Jay Treaty.

GUARD: Are we gonna have a problem here?

TOM: Not if you know what you’re doing.

HARRY: Tom?!! Give him your passport.

TOM: Don’t have to.

GUARD: K, can I get you to pull over to Door number 4.

They slowly pull away from the guard house.

HARRY: (*Quietly*) What are you doing?

TOM: (*Laughing to himself*) It’s my right. (Barnes 16)

For Haudenosaunee peoples in particular, this moment encouraged the audience to compare the “imagined worlds on stage [...] with the ‘real’ world outside the venue” (Tompkins 12). It would have been a familiar scene to witness, describing what has in recent years become a normalised experience

for many travelling across the border, what Audra Simpson describes as “border trouble, border nonsense, the ‘bullshit’ that we go through when we cross the border” (*Mohawk* 123). She explains:

The ongoing ‘bullshit’ [...] was heightened after 9/11, [...] when our rights were constructed, along with those of others, as a threat to national security and our forms of self-identification (and formal identification by the state) became subjected to great scrutiny. ‘Status cards’ issued by Canada and the United States attesting to our recognition as Indians would no longer suffice; our traditional ‘red cards’ or passports deemed not up to security standard; our bodies, narratives, and arguments then folded into the seemingly new threat to settler sovereignty and security - the illegal alien, the always-possible terrorist - rendering perhaps all bodies with colour as border transgressors with the presumed intent to harm. (Ibid.)

Many of those who had not personally encountered such experiences will have heard about two cases that made national and international headlines. In 2011, Joyce King, director of the Mohawk Council of Ahkwesáhsne’s Justice Department on the Ahkwesáhsne reserve (which straddles Ontario, Quebec and New York State)<sup>76</sup>, had her passport not only refused, but confiscated by border security officials. King explains that “[t]hey called it a ‘fantasy document,’ but that’s my identity [...]. ‘If it’s a fantasy document, does that make me a fantasy person living in a fantasy country?’”

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<sup>76</sup> Audra Simpson explains, “the territory of and the *people* of Ahkwesáhsne are crossed by four state and provincial boundaries and jurisdiction, as well as an international boundary line that bifurcates their territory”, and emphasises that “this territory was divided without their consent” (*Mohawk* 128; italics in original).

(qtd. in Carlson)<sup>77</sup> A year earlier, a 47-person delegation of athletes on the Iroquois National Lacrosse Team, on their way to the World Lacrosse tournament, were denied entry into the UK because they were travelling on their Haudenosaunee passports.<sup>78</sup> British officials demanded they use either Canadian or US documents, as their identification did not contain biometric chips and other post-9/11 security requirements, and were “thus unrecognizable as legitimate” (A. Simpson, *Mohawk* 184). US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton intervened on behalf of the Iroquois Nationals to offer a one-time exclusion. This documentation, argues Simpson, was:

[I]ntended to move the Kaianere'kó:wa<sup>79</sup> forward, out of the past, into the present, and into the border guard's hand; into his head, into the state's imaginary of their body politics and its imaginings of admissible bodies - bodies attached in a secure manner to a recognizable, or in this (presently) unrecognizable, political order. (Ibid. 185)

The Lacrosse team were incensed that they were to compete on passports from nation-states to which they do not belong. Tonya Gonella Frichner, the Iroquois Lacrosse Team spokesperson and negotiator, stated, “[w]e are

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<sup>77</sup> ‘Fantasy documents’ are “[d]ocuments with no authority and which are not officially recognised - they can occur in various forms and may have the physical appearance of a passport” (Home Office). The Canadian Customs Act lists 71 examples, this includes: “the Iroquois, Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek [I]ndigenous nations; countries that no longer exist under their former names, such as ‘Czechoslovakia’; decolonized countries, such as British Honduras; and some unexplained entries, such as Wisconsin and Principality of Vikingland” (Toensing).

<sup>78</sup> This would occur again in 2015 with the under-19 Haudenosaunee women's lacrosse team. They had to pull out from the World Championship hosted in Scotland, as officials would not let the team enter into the UK with their Haudenosaunee passports. Only a few members carried either a US or Canadian passport (Laskaris).

<sup>79</sup> Kaianere'kó:wa is the Great Law of Peace, “the ‘ancient’ governing agreement between the Five and then Six Nations that brought peace to their people and organized them into a system of clans, chiefs, and clan mothers, in the ‘new world’s first federal system’ [...] and, some have asserted, ‘democracy’” (A. Simpson, *Mohawk* 184).

representing a nation, and we are not going to travel on the passport of a competitor” (qtd. in Ibid. 1).

These experiences suggest a formulation not only of state identity, but also how international perceptions of nationhood and sovereignty, and discourses on security, affect Indigenous autonomy and performances of identity. In *Sovereign Alliances* the border is presented as a site of contestation, one that disrupts a consensus of national identity as celebrated by the nation-state during the War of 1812 bicentennial in Canada. They fought not for Canada, but for Indigenous nationhood, sovereignty, and their lands. Demonstrating how, as Nadine Holdsworth writes, “theatre is deeply implicated in constructing the nation through the imaginative realm and provides a site where the nation can be put under the microscope” (6); and where, as Helen Gilbert writes, “communities register, reiterate and/or contest modes and models of national belonging” (“Forward” vii).

In *Sovereign Alliances*, the performance provided a public setting to reclaim Indigenous experiences and perspectives of the War of 1812; to re-story how the war has affected Indigenous communities outside of the macro-commemorative narrative that it established ‘Canada’ and national identity. As Monique Mojica (Kuna and Rappahannock) and Ric Knowles (settler) explain: “In Western tradition, theatre is fiction, ‘just stories’”, but “[i]n First Nations cultures, stories are never ‘just stories.’ They are essential ways of communicating memory, history, belief, and tradition” (v).

The live performance of *Sovereign Alliances* did this by articulating and staging an Indigenous border experience and labour that is a wholly

different encounter for unmarked settler bodies.<sup>80</sup> As scholar Gillian Roberts writes:

Where white Anglo-Canadians see a kind of cultural defence of the Canada-US border as paramount to their sovereignty, First Nations sovereignty does not depend on the border; indeed, the border represents the nation-states against which First Nations sovereignty must be exercised. (130)

The international border is not just a policed site imposing territorial control over geography, but a public site that exposes the state's efforts to control and contain Indigenous bodies, their lands, their identities, their histories, and their sovereignty. The border requires that they legitimise, symbolically, legally, and juridically, the existence of the nation-state through a declaring of allegiance. It does so by forcing subjects to be accountable to its rules, regulations, and prescribed national identity, performing the relinquishing of inherent Indigenous rights, strangulating "the ability of [I]ndigenous people to define their own identity and develop economically and politically on their own terms" (Bruyneel, *Third* xvii).

The border is also a material site straddling and physically dividing communities, fragmenting the cultural and territorial integrity of nations. In this way, it also performs as a monument to settler triumphalism. As Eileen Luna-Firebaugh (Choctaw/Cherokee) explains, the imposed borders "created division and divisiveness", within the Indigenous nations forcefully separated

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<sup>80</sup> This is not to offer a romanticised idea that, historically, Indigenous nations never had borders. Such a view is, however, upheld in the novel *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) by Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo). Greg Sarris (Gronon Rancheria) argues that "[o]ne of the things that Silko is doing there is conflating the notion of US and colonial, if you will, borders versus Aboriginal borders. Indian people did have borders. They killed each other over them" (Sarris and Burns 285).

from one another (162). It is because of this that Thomas King (Cherokee/Greek/German) refuses to see the international border as anything but an artificial “imaginary line”:

It’s a line from somebody else’s imagination; it’s not my imagination. It divides people like the Mohawk into the Canadian Mohawks and US Mohawks. They’re the same people. It divides the Blackfoot who live in Browning [in the state of Montana] from the Blackfoot who live at Standoff [in the province of Alberta], for example. So the line is a political line, that border line...that kind of border and that kind of nationalism creates centres that I don’t think do Indian people any good. It suggests things to us that we should become, things I’m not much interested in becoming. (qtd. in Davidson et al. 125-126; ellipses in original)

This way of seeing a fictitious line resonates with Audra Simpson’s argument that “[a]lthough Mohawks [...] are border crossers, they are not border *transgressors*”, as it is the “settler regimes that [...] actually transgresses *them*” (*Mohawk* 124; italics in original).

Simpson identifies the struggle for Indigenous survival as a politics or “cartography of refusal, one that takes shape in the invocation of the prior experience of sovereignty and nationhood, and [its] labor in the present” (*Mohawk* 33). It is a refusal that refuses the state’s “gift” (Ibid. 1) of a passport, and for those who choose to engage in this act, “they insist upon the integrity of Haudenosaunee governance” (Ibid. 7). Sophie Nield discusses how borders “serve to construct the national imaginary, by making and unmaking the ‘other’ (66). Writing in a similar vein, Sonia Magdalena Tascón expands

on Benedict Anderson's work by arguing that "[n]ational borders actualise the limits of the nation's identity and its geographical integrity; the two are not separatable. Within them is contained the imagined community" (qtd. in Cox 185).

Such an intervention of refusing to be part of the settler colonial national imaginary is performed by Tom, as he refuses to give his Canadian passport, which he purposely left in his car so as to engage in the political act of asserting Indigenous sovereignty. After he is escorted into a border control room, the following exchange takes place with another border guard:

BORDER GUARD: I understand you were trying to cross without proper ID.

TOM: Not really sir. I had ID.

BORDER GUARD: May I see it?

*Tom hands the guard his passport; A yellow Iroquois passport.*

BORDER GUARD: What is this?

TOM: It's an Iroquois passport.

BORDER GUARD: This isn't real.

TOM: Yes sir it is. Since the 1920s.

BORDER GUARD: I heard about these things. Never seen one.

Nobody takes these things. [...]

TOM: Sir I am not trying to be trouble, but I am going to a powwow right now to honour my grandfather, an Iroquois man who fought in Vietnam. He always told me that he hated to go but sometimes you have to fight. Cause there are things worth keeping.

*The border guard shakes his head and smiles a little.*

BORDER GUARD: Look son. My Dad was in Vietnam but things changed when the planes went into the towers. You know? We need to protect our borders. We need to make sure that we don't just let anyone in.

TOM: Ironic.

BORDER GUARD: Sorry?

TOM: It's just had we had the same policy 500 years ago... (Barnes 17 18)

Tom's political act challenges the 'fixedness' of the Canada-US border. It is indicative of Kevin Bruyneel's "third space of sovereignty", a concept that reformulates Homi Bhabha's idea of a third space (2007). Bruyneel explains this "resides neither simply inside nor outside the American political system but rather exists on these very boundaries, exposing both the practices and the contingencies of American [and Canadian] colonial rule" (*Third* xvii). A third space of sovereignty was similarly enacted by Warren on Parliament Hill during the spectacle of the Canada Day festivities during the War of 1812 bicentennial, an intervention that rendered visible the political and economic exigencies of settler colonialism, of disavowing the violent founding of what would become Canada. Taken together, Warren's protest and *Sovereign Alliances* both challenged, though in different settings, the teleological and celebratory narrative of closure enacted during the Conservative Party's commemorative project. Both troubled the territorial map of Canada; bringing into view Michel de Certeau's observation that "what the map cuts up, the story cuts across" (qtd. in Conquergood 32).



This chapter began with an examination of the politics of Harper's attempt to story Canada towards a martial identity of a warrior nation. I argued that this was done as part of an effort to overhaul Liberal narratives of national identity, and to divert attention from Canada's mission in Afghanistan. As explored in the latter half of the chapter, however, it was also a way in which to maintain, as with Canada's peacekeeping mythology, the state's active "disavowal, not error or ignorance" of the colonial settler present (Shulman qtd. in Bruyneel, "Trouble" 240). It is in this context that I presented Warren's protest and Herbie Barnes's play as two Indigenous re-storying interventions contesting the colonial present tense.

The next chapter continues this discussion of alternative narratives of Canada by examining the protests that took place under the banner of 'Idle No More' in the winter of 2012; an Indigenous-led movement that would not only render visible the colonial present, but in doing so would also illustrate irreconcilable tensions regarding how Indigenous nations and the state narrate the story of 'the nation.'

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **“Uncomfortable Mirrors to Canadian Society”: Resisting Settler Law and Body Politics In and Beyond the Idle No More Movement**

Emerging in the autumn and winter of 2012-2013, Idle No More, an Indigenous-led grassroots movement, was formed in response to the legislative changes proposed in the Conservative Party’s federal government budget plan, originally issued on 29 March 2012. The budget was followed by the tabling of two omnibus bills that same year,<sup>81</sup> Bill C-38, the Jobs, Growth and Long-Term Prosperity Act (announced in April) and Bill C-45, The Jobs and Growth Act, 2012 (announced in October).<sup>82</sup> Although INM objected to both Bills, its primary target was the latter, specifically in relation to the amendments which removed, previously in place, federal measures that were safeguarding the protection of the country’s navigable waterways, natural resources, and Indigenous traditional lands.

Following the tabling of Bill C-45 in the House of Commons, an exchange on Facebook Chat took place between four women living in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Sylvia McAdam (Saysewahum from Big River Reserve in Treaty 6 territory) turned to the social networking site to voice her indignation towards the federal government’s abnegation of its obligation to consult and accommodate Indigenous communities before ratifying legislation. McAdam contacted Nina Wilson (Nakota and Plains Cree from

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<sup>81</sup> Omnibus bills bring together dozens of proposed amendments to legislation, covering diverse and unrelated subject areas, including those not related to fiscal policy, into one document. Although Stephen Harper was not the first Prime Minister to table these, its first use in Canadian Parliament dates back to 1888 (Marleau and Montpetit), his administrations increased its usage. A number of political commentators, as well as former Conservative cabinet ministers, have argued that Harper’s omnibus bills circumvented democratic procedure by preventing meaningful debate by MPs, as the volume of provisions, regularly outlined in hundreds of pages, would be rushed through in an all-or-nothing single vote in the House of Commons; see Jeffrey (131-134).

<sup>82</sup> Both these bills are now law: Bill C-38 was passed by Parliament on 29 June 2012, Bill C-45 on 14 December 2012.

Kahkewistahaw First Nation, Treaty 4 territory), Jessica Gordon (Pasqua, Treaty 4 Territory) and later brought Sheelah McLean (a third-generation settler, Treaty 5 territory) into the conversation. They brainstormed a campaign, using social media to spread their message and information about events, seeking to raise national awareness regarding the Bill's abrogation of Indigenous treaty rights. Entitling their thread 'Idle No More,' which according to Gordon was a motivational reminder "to get our butts off the couch to work on this" (qtd. in Curry, "Untangling"), their call mobilised thousands of Indigenous peoples, and settler allies, across the country in diffuse mass rallies and 'flash mob' round dances in shopping malls and busy intersections, their bodies halting traffic on rail lines and highways with the staging of peaceful blockades, and in marches taking place on busy city streets with INM supporters drumming, singing, holding placards, and chanting "Idle No More!"

When the former Aboriginal Affairs Minister, John Duncan, was asked about the escalating INM protests in late December 2012, he responded: "That's social media, so we'll just have to see where that goes" (qtd. in Lukacs). This chapter takes this remark to task, exploring the ways in which it speaks to the settler state's attempt to deny and marginalise the fact that Indigenous peoples have been challenging the colonial project for centuries. While INM "quickly became one of the largest Indigenous mass movements in Canadian history" (INM, "Story"),<sup>83</sup> it was not an isolated burst of protest events; what Baz Kershaw terms as a "volcanic view of protest", a view that

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<sup>83</sup> INM also gained support from across the globe, sparking hundreds of solidarity protests and rallies. For a partially compiled map of where INM events took place, both in and outside of Canada, see <http://www.mediacoop.ca/story/idle-no-more-map-events-spreading-across-canada-an/15320>; accessed 1 March 2016.

“usually posits that disruptive events are the irrepressible blow-out of a vast and usually invisible mass of turbulent socio-political material” (120). As Michi Saagiik Nishnaabeg scholar and activist Leanne Simpson argues, “Indigenous Peoples whose lands are occupied by the Canadian state are currently engaged in the longest running resistance movement in Canadian history; indeed, one that predates the formation of Canada itself” (“Oshkimaadiziig” 13). INM is thus only a recent energised flashpoint of this resistance of Indigenous peoples collectively rising as “Uncomfortable Mirrors to Canadian society” (LaRocque, xxvii); reflecting back not images of settler benevolence, but ongoing colonial violence.

An example of this can be found in the intervention from Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat Cree Nation, who on 11 December 2012 began a hunger strike in a tepee on the site of Aboriginal Experiences, a cultural centre on Victoria Island, unceded Algonquin land<sup>84</sup> that sits below and across the Ottawa River, and in view of Parliament Hill,<sup>85</sup> to protest the federal government’s indifference not only to the deplorable conditions of her reserve in Northern Ontario, but of communities across Canada. Chief Spence’s hunger strike provides the main case study for this chapter; a protest that galvanised INM and sustained its momentum.

Chapter 2 is divided into four sections. Part I analyses how the settler colonial present was secured through Bill C-45. Part II explores how

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<sup>84</sup> Victoria Island, one of three islands (also Chaudière Island and Albert Island) at the base of Chaudière Falls, in what is today Ottawa-Gatineau, Ontario, is part of the area Indigenous peoples commonly refer to as Asinabka, which translates from Anishinaabemowin to “The Place of Glare Rock.”

<sup>85</sup> In operation since 2000, Aboriginal Experiences is a private business run by the Indigenous-led Turtle Island Tourism Company. To see the visual setting of Spence’s protest, please view this *Global News* footage, filmed 20 days into Spence’s hunger strike: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtCGt3qPWj8>; accessed 1 September 2016.

narratives of national identity produced by the state were called into question in the larger context of the Idle No More movement. Part III examines how the historical colonial past and present were rendered visible through the high-profile hunger strike of Chief Theresa Spence. Finally, Part IV unpacks the significance of the embodied protest, which I view as being charged with biopolitical meaning; a body that performatively indexed, through its public starvation, ongoing histories of settler colonialism.

### **Part I: Colonial Violence and Bill C-45**

Bill C-45 was passed in the House of Commons in December 2012 in a 50-27 majority vote, despite the proposal of 1,600 revisions from opposition parties in an effort to prevent its implementation (*National Post*, “Senate”). The 64 legislative changes that were accepted included amendments to laws that directly impact Indigenous communities throughout Canada, including the Indian Act (1876) and the Navigable Waters Protection Act (1882).

Concerning the Indian Act, Bill C-45 revised the administrative decision-making process for ‘land designation’; a term used by the Government of Canada to describe Indigenous communities leasing reserve lands in the long or short term to third parties. Idle No More supporters argue that Bill C-45 lowers the approval threshold for consent for these arrangements, as it no longer requires a double majority referendum from the community in question. The process now only necessitates a simple majority vote made in the affirmative by the community to grant authority for the passing of a commercial designation. Because a minimum number of attendees is no longer required for the casting of a ballot, this means that

regardless of the population of a Band, the final decision to lease land to an energy company, for example, can rest on just a few members of a community showing up to the meeting (McAdam 89). This makes the final decision dependent on the community making themselves available for the meeting, assuming they are duly informed of the voting sessions. As Mi'kmaq lawyer, scholar, and INM spokesperson Pamela Palmater explains, this does not consistently happen, as “many of the off-reserve band members don’t get any of those notices” (“Treaty”). Furthermore, Palmater argues, the measure conveniently ignores the fact “that many First Nations in this country resist the paternalistic control of Indian Affairs [INAC] over their communities, and they refuse to participate in referendums held by Indian Affairs on their territories for traditional and other reasons” (Ibid.).

Bill C-45 also removes accountability from the Governor in Council in final decisions for land designation. Instead, the responsibility for the signing off of leased lands has been transferred to the Minister of Aboriginal (now Indigenous) Affairs, who is given the power to veto any vote (McAdam 89). The Conservative Party justified this removal of ‘red tape’ as a way to expedite business that the previous voting process had supposedly stalled, on the grounds that the prior provisions were “incompatible with the fast pace of modern business”, and had “undermine[d] First Nations governance while incurring unnecessary costs to Canada and First Nations” (Government of Canada, Bill C-45, Part 4). As discussed in the Terminology section of this study, however, reserve land, which is protected by the Indian Act, is not for private sector use. Palmater stresses that “what the voting threshold is, is protection for those reserve lands because those reserve lands are held for the

collective use and benefit for the band” (“Treaty”). INM argues that the federal government invited capitalist encroachment of Crown lands, and that the new measures would inevitably lead to further territorial dispossession and cultural alienation from Indigenous lands.<sup>86</sup>

The other piece of legislation that instigated protest from INM was the Navigation Protection Act. This replaces the 130-year-old Navigable Waters Protection Act, which had required federal approval for any new development on water deep enough to float a canoe (Government of Canada, Bill C-45, Part 4). The 2012 statute withdraws federal oversight and protection from thousands of waterways in Canada, save a jurisdiction covering just 97 lakes, 62 rivers, and three ocean coastal areas. EcoJustice, an environmental law organisation, calculates that the Navigation Protection Act “excludes 99.7 per cent of Canada’s lakes and more than 99.9 per cent of Canada’s rivers from federal oversight.” The removal of strict environmental requirements, which Transport Canada, a government department, identified as “pointless assessments [that] waste time and money” (*CNW*, “Government”), was defended as a way to hasten the approval of applications for commercial navigation projects, which would contribute to “long-term economic growth and job creation” (*Ibid.*). With the new provisions, only the most active waterways are now federally protected.

For any waterway not on the list, this means that applying parties are no longer required to provide thorough evidence that any new infrastructure, whether bridges, dams, or pipelines, will not result in damage to the waterways. The revision of the title of the Act is noteworthy too, as it reveals

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<sup>86</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the extent to which Bill C-45 has impacted Indigenous communities since its implementation in 2012.

that ‘navigation’ and not ‘navigable waters’ is to be protected (Monchalin 226). Similar changes can be found in Bill C-38, which replaced the 1992 Canadian Environmental Assessment Act with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012,<sup>87</sup> shortening screening process timelines that previously involved in-depth public consultations from the affected communities (Woo 184). With the responsibility for “all energy and pipeline projects approvals transferred to the [National Energy Board]”, Brooke Jeffrey observes, the benefits of these weakened regulations lie solely with the industry sector: “the government was literally opening the door to oil and gas projects” (192).<sup>88</sup>

By opening the door to future private infrastructure projects on Indigenous lands, the Jobs and Growth Act also invites the state further to accumulate and claim occupancy of Indigenous lands, echoing scholar Patrick Wolfe’s thesis that “[t]erritoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element” (388). Responding to Bill C-45, Indigenous scholar Dale Turner (Anishinaabe) has argued that it replicates past colonial policies of the settler state, notably the 1969 White Paper introduced by Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chrétien. Formally entitled the ‘Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy,’ Turner

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<sup>87</sup> The omnibus bills also reflect Harper’s wider policy approach to the environment; for example, in 2007 the Prime Minister withdrew Canada from the Kelowna Accord, an international treaty to combat global warming.

<sup>88</sup> During his time in office, Harper pushed for the implementation of TransCanada’s Keystone XL pipeline, proposed in 2008, which would have carried oil from the Athabasca oil sand deposits in Alberta to the Texas Gulf Coast; US President Barack Obama rejected the project in 2015. Another major project is the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline, proposed in 2004, which could carry half a million barrels of oil a day from the tar sands to Kitimat, BC. In 2016, Indigenous nations won a Supreme Court battle, arguing that the government failed properly to consult the Gitga’an peoples and other coastal Indigenous nations; the project is still under official review. Keystone XL and Enbridge are but two examples of a network of dam projects, oil, and gas pipelines proposed in recent years. In 2014, the Fraser Institute estimated that “over the next decade, more than 600 major resource projects, [...], are planned for Canada”, and that “every oil and gas project currently proposed in western Canada implicates at least one First Nations community” (Bains iii); see Conclusion.



explains that this policy proposal “required that Indians be stripped of their rights, that their lands be turned into private property, and their natural resources exploited for economic gain”, and that “[i]n the process, Canadians would welcome and celebrate Indian’s assimilation into mainstream Canadian society” (“White” 121). For Turner, Bill C-45 is the White Paper all over again. But whereas Trudeau’s government eventually backed down from implementing the policy as a result of widespread Indigenous protests, Bill C-45 is now law:

[T]he federal government’s solution to the Indian problem has not changed: extinguish Aboriginal title, open up Aboriginal homelands to large multinational resource companies, and exploit natural resources for the economic benefit of ‘all’ Canadians. Aboriginal peoples can either participate in this economic venture or be left behind to gradually, and inevitably vanish from the world (then conclude that they brought their disappearance on themselves). (Ibid. 122)

The Jobs and Growth Act, therefore, is part of a much larger historical infrastructure that both reinforces and secures the settler colonial project. Like the proposed White Paper, and now the enacted Bill C-45, it performs a policy that seeks to assimilate Indigenous peoples into Canada’s capitalist economic system, masked in terms of what American political theorist Lisa Duggan describes “as a kind of nonpolitics - a way of being reasonable, and of promoting universally desirable forms of economic expansion and democratic government” (10).

Bill C-45 also reinforces the settler logic of what Leslie Thielen-Wilson identifies as “rooted in the old European ideology of possessive

individualism and the European concept of private property” (13). To offer one example, this viewpoint was expressed in the writings and theories of the influential English seventeenth-century political philosopher John Locke, who viewed Indigenous peoples as having no right to land because they did not ‘improve’ the land. This epitomised settler colonial conceptualisations of space; land exists to be privately owned and ‘tamed’ through capitalist labour. Cole Harris explains that Locke’s labour theory of property was based on the assumption that land “left wholly to nature, was waste, the benefit of it amounting ‘to little more than nothing.’ [...] It was labour that ‘puts the difference of value on every thing.’ [...] Labour, wrote Locke, was the labourers’ title to land and the means by which the land’s product and value are enhanced” (49).

This Euro-centric understanding of land continues to underpin the settler colonial project of present-day Canada as practiced through law. It is of utmost importance to emphasise that dispossession of Indigenous peoples was historically practiced through legal instruments, and remains so to this day. While Canada imagines itself as a nation founded on lawfulness, “the Indian body” continues to perform as “a site of exception to the law” (Thobani 48). As Patricia Monture-Angus (Mohawk) observes:

Think about everything that First Nations people have survived in this country: the taking of our land, the taking of our children, residential schools, the current criminal justice system, the outlawing of potlatches, Sundances, and other ceremonies, and the stripping of Indian women (and other Indian people) of their status. Everything we survived as individuals or as Indian peoples. How was all of this

delivered? The answer is simple: through law. (qtd. in Thielen-Wilson 68)

This speaks to the principal issue that drove the Idle No More movement in its early stages, the Conservative Party's imposition of sweeping unilateral changes to legislation without taking the necessary measures for proper consultation with Indigenous peoples.

Canada's historical and legal obligation to consult and accommodate Indigenous communities regarding land and resource decisions is protected in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. The duty to consult gives communities the opportunity to respond to proposals by requesting assessment of potential environmental impacts, and to offer recommendations for amendments. In the 1990s, the Supreme Court of Canada reaffirmed the federal government's duty to consult, which includes: a duty "to consult with Indigenous communities where an Indigenous community has asserted or proven Aboriginal or treaty rights"; "to act honourably in dealing with Indigenous communities"; to be "of good faith in consultations, accommodations and negotiations and to avoid sharp dealing"; and "to substantially attempt to address Indigenous concerns" (Manley-Casimir 3). However, the Supreme Court has never outlined specific parameters of what 'duty to consult' entails, thus the process remains open to interpretation and, more pertinently in this case, to contestation.

As a result, Kirsten Manley-Casimir observes, there is "a tendency for the Canadian government and industry to approach their legal obligations to consult in a way that only meets the minimum necessary requirements" (4). Leslie Thielen-Wilson is more critical in her assessment, arguing that "this is

rarely done [...] Canada and provincial governments remain bent on securing profit from resource rich land” (82). Bill-C45 serves as an illustrative example of this. Several weeks after the Bill passed through the Senate, the Mikisew Cree First Nation in Alberta filed for a judicial review of both Bill C-38 and Bill C-45. They successfully argued that the government had failed to fulfil its fiduciary duty to consult their community within Treaty 8 territory. Their victory resulted in “only declaratory relief”, however, meaning that the requested injunctions were never issued (Native Law Centre).

Seen from a broader perspective, the case is indicative of the Janus-faced character of settler Canada: While publicly embracing a discourse of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, intimated by Harper as one that is based on “forging a new relationship” (Government of Canada, “House”), in judicial settings the pursued outcomes of reconciliation are starkly different. The failure to consult Indigenous peoples, which includes their legal right to say no to resource extraction projects, has time and again been ignored by the state.

It is within this context that Idle No More would emerge. Its first event took place in a community enterprise centre in Saskatoon on 10 November 2012. It would be weeks later, however, on 4 December 2012, when public awareness of INM swelled after a confrontation between several Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs and Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver in a hall outside the House of Commons. Attempting to enter the chamber to speak out against Bill C-45 publicly, the chiefs were stopped and refused entry by security guards at the doorway before they could enter to confront sitting MPs.

Over the sounds of a beating drum, Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee addressed the media:

[The Prime Minister] says there's going to be jobs for us, [...] yeah well, some company from an international body takes billions out of our territories is not the answer to the poverty in our communities. [...] They don't have our consent. You know they're breaking their own laws, the United Nations Declaration, the Canadian Constitution. We've got about a 150 Supreme Court cases, and just on and on. We've tried everything. We met Members of Parliament. We've met the Senate. We've gone to the parliaments in Ontario and across the country. We've tried everything. We've made petitions. We've written letters. We've had all kinds of meetings. Nobody is listening to us. This is the problem we have here. Nobody is listening to us. (in Barrera and Jackson)

Video footage of this intervention circulated on news and social media networks; according to Idle No More's official website, the "refusal to allow First Nations leadership to respectfully enter the House of Commons triggered an even greater mobilization of First Nation people across the country" (Meekis). On 10 December 2012, a national Day of Action and Solidarity was called by INM's organisers, so as to "[d]emand that our government be accountable to the Treaties and to Mother Earth! Our Silence is Consent!!!" (qtd. in Coates 48) The message spread quickly, particularly on Facebook and Twitter.<sup>89</sup> Coinciding with International Human Rights Day, thousands of

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<sup>89</sup> For an analysis of how social media contributed to the development of INM - becoming a valuable tool in diffusing information, a site for dialogue, a platform for devising on-the-ground interventions, in helping to coordinate events, and mobilising supporters in cities and in communities across Canada - see Barker (2014). His work is particularly instructive in

people joined rallies and marches staged in dozens of urban sites and rural communities across Canada, to demand that Indigenous communities be listened to. It was on this day that Attawapiskat's Chief Theresa Spence would make her public announcement that she would be commencing a hunger strike.

## **Part II: Calling a State of Emergency**

Speaking before a media scrum that had gathered outside the federal Parliament buildings in Ottawa, Spence declared: "I'm willing to die for my people because the pain is too much and it's time for the government to realize what (it's) doing to us" (qtd. in Stone; brackets in original). She continued: "Somebody asked me if I was afraid to die. No, I'm not afraid to die. If that's the journey for me ... I will go and I'm looking forward to it" (Ibid.; ellipsis in original). The following day, Chief Spence embarked on her hunger strike. Subsisting on fish broth and medicinal tea for 44 days, Spence's aim was to draw national attention to Canada's chronic failure to honour and respect its obligations enshrined in the constitutionally recognised historical treaties. Her protest also sought to expose the Conservative Party's refusal to address the deplorable conditions and economic depression experienced by Indigenous communities across the country, but particularly in the north, including that of her own community of Attawapiskat, an isolated, fly-in only Cree reserve in Northern Ontario.

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examining not only how the movement is "eliding mainstream media" and "creatively co-opting technological resources", but crucially, how INM's online engagement is connected "to the wider land-based movement in the tradition of centuries of Indigenous activism and resistance" (*Direct* 51).

Without ready access to clean water, heating, electricity, or indoor plumbing, many individuals and families in Attawapiskat are forced to live in overcrowded tents, poorly insulated shacks or trailers infested with toxic mould. Its approximately 1,800 residents also live on contaminated land as a result of a 1979 diesel spill, which has harmed the health and well-being for those on the reserve. For example, Attawapiskat had been asking the federal government for 14 years to build a new school that was forced to close in 2000 as a result of the massive pipeline rupture. Students were crammed into drafty portable units, with faulty oil furnaces that routinely broke during frigid winter temperatures (Mackay and Sinclair 2011; Stastna 2011).<sup>90</sup>

The pollution resulting from the 1979 leak is compounded by ongoing activities from a nearby open-pit diamond mining facility. De Beers began consultation on the project with Attawapiskat First Nation in 1999, and in 2005 an executed Impact Benefit Agreement was ratified; the extraction of resources from land 90 kilometres west of Attawapiskat began in 2009. As scholar Shiri Pasternak documents, the mine's operations have done little to benefit the community. Pasternak observes that while "Victors Mines has netted \$488.8 million in gross revenue [...] Attawapiskat's royalty [is] at little more than 1.5% of the mine's revenues", receiving approximately 2 million dollars annually in royalties (13). Not only have meagre financial royalties accrued to the community, but the work of the mine has caused repeated sewage backups, forcing many residents to flee their homes as a result of flooding; even though the federal government had been informed on previous

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<sup>90</sup> It was only in 2014 that a new building was finally opened. According to a 2011 survey from the Assembly of First Nations, "[a]pproximately 47% of First Nations currently need a new school", and many of these, like Attawapiskat, have been waiting for 10 or more years (AFN, "Chiefs' Assembly").

occasions that the community's septic tank required fixing and that the pump's failure was imminent. When there was flooding in 2005, and again in 2009, it was the community, not the government, that was forced to cover the costs of the evacuation (Ibid. 7).

While Ottawa systematically ignored the community's concerns and frustrations for years, in November 2011 the problems escalated, and Spence was compelled to declare a state of emergency in Attawapiskat.<sup>91</sup> The Canadian Red Cross flew in emergency supplies, including generators, sleeping bags, heaters and winter clothing. The UN followed with an investigation into the conditions relating to the acute housing crisis, which according to Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People, James Anaya, was "dire" (qtd. in *CTV News*, "UN Envoy"). In 2012, it was reported that "the community has 316 housing units, of which 46 (14.6%) are considered adequate, 148 (46.8%) require major renovations, and 122 (38.6%) require replacement" (Deloitte & Touche LLP 2). Both the provincial and federal governments ignored Spence's call for aid, however. According to Charlie Angus, the New Democratic Party Member of Parliament for Timmins-James Bay, "not a single federal or provincial official ha[d] even bothered to visit the community" three weeks after the announcement of the crisis was first delivered.

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<sup>91</sup> Five states of emergency have been called in Attawapiskat since 2006. The latest was called in April 2016, in response to 11 individuals attempting suicide in a 24-hour period, while 28 had tried to do so in March. Only days after the emergency was called, a group of five children, some as young as nine years old, tried to take their own lives. The crisis in Attawapiskat has shone a spotlight on the high rates of suicide amongst Indigenous peoples. Only a month earlier, another remote Cree community, Pimicikamak, in Northern Manitoba also declared a state of emergency, after it was made known that 140 students and young adults were considering taking their own lives. Sherene Razack cites the chronic suicide crisis of Indigenous peoples in Canada as "evidence that Aboriginal peoples live in a state of colonization as direct and coercive as prevailed two centuries ago" ("Gendered" 134).



It was in response to these events that Spence travelled to Ottawa and announced that she would be undertaking a hunger strike. Her key demand was that a group meeting be called with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Governor General David Johnston (representing the Crown), and Indigenous leaders, in which they would discuss ways forward for the implementation of policies that uphold treaty rights. In doing so, she hoped “to revive the *Covenant Chain*, an Indigenous treaty that had provided regular consultations with settler society until 1858” (Woo 183).

Although a meeting was eventually arranged for 11 January 2013, Johnston declined the request, arguing that the role of Governor General does not entail involvement in policy issues (Galloway, “Bob”). In response, Spence released a public statement explaining that Johnston’s attendance was “integral”, as he represented the Crown and its direct relationship with Indigenous peoples (qtd. in *CBC News*, “Attawapiskat”). Without his presence, it was no longer a nation-to-nation meeting in which both sides would meet as sovereign equals; it would just be another “working group” (Ibid.). Spence refused to attend.

It is essential to note here that there is a significant divide between how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples understand the history and ongoing role of the Crown in Canada (Tidridge 77). Appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister, the Governor General acts as representative of the Sovereign in Canada; it is a largely ceremonial position that generally does not allow for input in major policy discussions or decisions. For many settler Canadians, the British Monarchy is simply a

remnant of the country's past.<sup>92</sup> The monarchy remains present in Canadian public and political life, however, albeit largely at the symbolic level. When Chief Spence demanded to meet with Johnston, some voices in the national media labelled it as “a fantasy that native leaders need to put to rest” (*Globe and Mail*, “Native”).

Many Indigenous peoples, however, see the Queen as an interlocutor between themselves and the Government of Canada (Tidridge 77). After Johnston declined Spence's request, she responded by writing to the Governor General to articulate why she had made the demand. Spence explained, “[i]t remains the duty of your office, as Her Majesty's representative in Canada, to maintain watch and to ensure the faithful performance of the terms of the Treaty entered into between the Crown and the First Nations in Canada” (qtd. in Ibid. 79).

With Spence continuing her hunger strike, the meeting went ahead with fewer than 20 chiefs from the AFN in attendance, several chiefs having stayed away in solidarity with Spence (*CBC News*, “First”). It would be weeks later, after negotiations led by interim Liberal Leader Bob Rae and Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation,<sup>93</sup> that Spence was convinced to abandon her protest on 24 January.

Although her original demand was never met, Spence issued a 13-point Declaration of Commitment as a condition of the cessation of her protest. Drafted in part by the AFN and Danny Metatawabin, Spence's spokesperson, the document was signed by various parties, including the AFN, the Native

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<sup>92</sup> As examined in Chapter 1, under Prime Minister Harper this history was re-inserted at the centre of state-led narratives of national identity during the War of 1812 bicentennial.

<sup>93</sup> This is an advocacy organisation representing 49 Indigenous communities within Northern Ontario, including Attawapiskat.

Women's Association of Canada, and the federal opposition caucuses of the Liberal Party and New Democratic Party. The Declaration was written as a pledge that Canada will address outstanding issues related to treaty and non-treaty lands, and outlines a sequence of work plans to ensure that a collective commitment to repair the treaty relationship will be implemented through a series of short, medium and long term goals. The points included improving the housing crisis in Indigenous communities, and the full implementation of the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),<sup>94</sup> which recognises the distinct status of Indigenous peoples across the globe, asserting that "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (UN General Assembly 4).

The Declaration also demanded that the Conservative government commence a national public inquiry into the hundreds of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada (*CBC News*, "Chief"), a crisis that has lasted over three decades; this will be discussed later in the chapter. The Conservative Party did not endorse the document, further undermining the state's commitment to the national reconciliation project, and bringing into sharp focus the active maintenance of the colonial present.

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<sup>94</sup> Canada initially voted against the Declaration, arguing that the wording was inconsistent with Canadian law (*CTV News*, "Canada"). In response, AFN Grand Chief Edward John stated that "[Canada] cannot present itself as a promoter of human rights internationally when in its own backyard it votes against the human rights of [I]ndigenous people" (qtd. in Edwards). His sentiment echoed similar criticism from human rights groups and other Indigenous leaders. In 2010, Canada signed the UNDRIP, but failed to endorse it. Both Bill C-38 and Bill C-45 are a direct assault on the Declaration, as the government failed to obtain informed consent from Indigenous communities before implementing new legislation, illustrating why the government did not readily sign the UN document in the first place.

Idle No More activity continues to the present day,<sup>95</sup> although protests mobilised on a national scale decreased in frequency following Spence's issuing of the 13-Point Declaration, reducing the visibility of the movement as it faded from the headlines.<sup>96</sup> In a shift away from a focus on protests, INM is now primarily engaged in community-based projects.<sup>97</sup>

Some of the movement's supporters saw Spence's Declaration as an attempt by the AFN to co-opt INM's non-hierarchical structure, a view expressed by scholar and activist Taiaiake Alfred, who in late January 2013 published an article entitled "Idle No More and Indigenous Nationhood" advocating that INM broaden its purpose and regain its collective energy. His call inspired a group of Idle No More supporters to launch the Indigenous Nationhood Movement in November 2013, almost one year after Spence's hunger strike. By using the same acronym (INM), its co-founders, including Alfred, were consciously identifying a porous distinction between the two movements. In contrast to Idle No More, it does not focus on protests against federal legislation, but on organising community actions that strengthen cultural renewal; many of these take place within communities and beyond the public gaze.<sup>98</sup> Since the main concern of Chapter 2 is to explore how Idle No More and Chief Spence's intervention resisted the colonial present as enacted through law, I will limit my discussion to the events that unfolded in the winter of 2012-2013. But before turning to offer a performance analysis of

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<sup>95</sup> For a timeline of the Idle No More movement, see Kino-nda-niimi Collective (389- 409).

<sup>96</sup> Spence remained as Chief of the Attawapiskat First Nation until her resignation in 2015, ending a five-year tenure.

<sup>97</sup> One example is the "One House Many Nations" initiative launched in 2015 in Manitoba, an effort to find immediate solutions to tackle the housing crisis on reserves.

<sup>98</sup> An example of this shift in focus was the 2013 renaming of Mount Douglas to 'PKOLS,' described in the Introduction, which was a public intervention that took place under the simultaneous INM moniker of Idle No More and the Indigenous Nationhood Movement.

Spence's hunger strike, I now touch upon, through a broader theoretical discussion, another context informing the protests - the ways in which the movement troubled settler conceptions of national identity.

### **Part III: Visiting Victoria Island, Revisiting the Question of 'the Nation'**

In late April 2013, after attending the national TRC event hosted in Montreal, I travelled to Ottawa and made a brief visit to the Aboriginal Experiences cultural centre on Victoria Island. As I entered the grounds, a booming male voice from across the field shouted that the centre was closed, advising me to come back in the summer months. After excusing myself to leave, another staff member, wearing workers' gloves and with an energy drink in hand, approached and welcomed me to the centre. After explaining that I was curious to see the site of Spence's protest, I was brought to two indentations marked in the soil. The larger circle was the location of the tepee in which Spence had taken residence, whilst the other marked where a sacred fire had been maintained by Spence's helpers throughout the sub-zero temperatures of the days and nights of her six-week hunger strike. These two circles, I was informed, were the only visible remnants of Chief Spence's protest at Victoria Island.

I had been to Aboriginal Experiences once before; six months before Chief Spence would stage her hunger strike at this site, prior to attending the War of 1812 commemorative events organised on Parliament Hill for Canada Day in 2012. The cultural centre had been advertised as a public place that one could visit during the 1 July Canada Day festivities, and "[e]njoy authentic programs of First Nations drumming and dancing, traditional Aboriginal

cuisine, children's craft making and storytelling" (*Ottawa Citizen*, "Downtown"). I arrived just as an audience of visitors made their way to an outdoor tent for the dance programming scheduled that afternoon. I watched a Hoop Dancer move across the stage and interconnect an accumulating number of hoops as they spun on her arms, legs, and torso. She gracefully transformed into new shapes and intricate formations while her body was constantly in motion, her feet moving in rhythm to the accompanying recorded music. I shifted my gaze away from the stage and towards the audience. Several individuals were waving postcard-sized Canadian flags attached to cardboard sticks - I would later see this same item given out to the crowds scattered around Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Many had this souvenir in their possession as they watched the performance on Victoria Island: placing it in their hair, slipping it into the side pockets of their backpacks, and fastening it to their summer hats.

At that moment, I recalled Craig S. Womack's (Oklahoma Muscogee Creek-Cherokee) assertion that though "America loves Indian culture; America is much less enthusiastic about Indian land title" (11). In Canada, his observation finds equal resonance.<sup>99</sup> The de-politicisation of Indigenous identity, through an un-tethering of the deeply-entwined meshing of Indigenous nationhood, sovereignty, community, land, culture, language, and identity is how, as Kristina Fagan (member of NunatuKavut) notes, Indigenous cultural performances are wrongly interpreted by settler audiences

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<sup>99</sup> See Helen Gilbert's (2014) study of how while Indigenous participation in the opening ceremonies of the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010 was lauded as displaying Canada's multicultural values, the new sport infrastructure and facilities that were constructed for the games were built "on land never ceded to settlers" (170).

as “a nonchallenging form of difference where Aboriginal peoples become yet another culture in the mosaic” (“Tewatatha:wi” 14).

I want to call attention here to what meaning was generated in this moment of the national emblem of the settler state being “flagged” (Billig 1995) to the Indigenous dancer, who performed on unceded Algonquin land as part of the Canada Day celebrations, and during the War of 1812 bicentennial. As discussed in Chapter 1, for Algonquin Anishinaabe peoples in particular, this land represents a “traumascape” (Tumarkin 2004), a place marked by violence that continues to resonate in the present, a history that is actively forgotten in Canada’s national story. Because flag waving, as Michael Billig writes, not only performs as “ideological habits” of patriotism, forging a syncopated collective sense of nationalism, it also helps to “reproduce established nations as nations” (6).

In the context of Canada, flag waving is constitutive of a much broader and discursive network of “legitimizing performances” (Connerton 35) of settler amnesia through which claims to sovereignty are then presented as uncontested. It serves as a practice of establishing what Lorenzo Veracini describes as the needed “historylessness” in the national stories of settler states, in which “history is claimed and denied at the same time” (“Historylessness” 275): the history claimed is that this is ‘our land,’ and what is denied is that it is founded upon the theft of Indigenous lands.

As settler scholar Victoria Freedman reminds us, Indigenous peoples “are not the same as other Canadians”, that is, “[t]hey did not join under the same terms - in fact, the ancestors of most Native people never agreed to join Canada at all. They agreed to share the land, but not to give up their

sovereignty” (459). This observation strikes to the heart of the settler colonial project: Canada was established not through a consensual process of nation-building, but, to borrow Walker Connor’s term, through a process of “nation-destroying” of Indigenous nations (1972). The Government of Canada is yet to apologise for destroying whole nations, and with them, traditional governance structures and Indigenous political life, and yet this is something we celebrate when settlers brandish the national flag. I quote Pamela Palmater at length here, as she succinctly outlines selected moments from this early, violent, and largely forgotten history of what would eventually become established as Canada:

One of the most devastating outcomes of early Indian policy in Canada was the legalized murder of Indigenous peoples, sometimes for financial reward. Take the scalping bounties in Nova Scotia, for example, where Governor Cornwallis promised financial reward for every Mi’kmaw man, woman, and child killed [...]. This had the effect of reducing the Mi’kmaw population by up to 80 percent [...] But very little is ever written about this aspect of Nova Scotia history; Cornwallis himself is still celebrated in Nova Scotia, where they even named a school after him [...].<sup>100</sup> The Beothuk, originally from what is now known as Newfoundland, were vilified by settler governments as ‘dangerous and sub-human,’ and were ‘persecuted and murdered’ [...].

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<sup>100</sup> The school Palmater refers to is Cornwallis Junior High, which was renamed in 2011 by the regional school board as Halifax Central Junior High. Edward Cornwallis remains memorialised in other public settings, however, including buildings, a street, and a monument that has stood in downtown Halifax for over 80 years. After the school was renamed, Indigenous elders, activists, and historians continued petitioning efforts to have the monument removed. In 2016, the regional council, made up of “all-white” councillors, defeated the motion (Boon). The decision is a recent example of settlers minimising the atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples, raising questions about the efficacy of the national reconciliation project.



Other methods of ensuring the physical destruction of Indigenous peoples included the use of ‘biological weapons’ [...]. Colonial troops in the 1700s would give communities of Indigenous peoples blankets that were infested with the smallpox virus, with the effect of reducing the populations of specific Indigenous Nations by upwards of 50 percent. (“Genocide” 32)

In contrast to Canada Day, when nationals waved the Canadian flag during their visit to Victoria Island, during Spence’s intervention such “symbolic accoutrements of the nation” (Fox 39) at the site of Aboriginal Experiences were replaced by Indigenous carriers of identity. During the hunger strike, the flags hanging from the series of flag poles at the main entrance to the cultural centre were not Canadian national flags, but an array of Indigenous flags, including the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Flag, the flag of the Nishnawe Aski Nation, and the Warrior Flag (Mohawk Unity Flag).<sup>101</sup>

It is important to note here the performative dimensions of Indigenous flags as tools asserting Indigenous identity and registering dissent against the settler state. While this history remains under-theorised, a significant exception is the work of Kahnawá:ke scholar Kahente Doxtater (Horn-Miller) (2010), who has thoroughly documented the political significance of the Warrior Flag, created in the 1970s for the Mohawk Warrior Society. Featuring a profile of an Indigenous man set against a yellow sun and a red background,

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<sup>101</sup> Images of the various flags on display during Spence’s protest on Victoria Island can be seen throughout Alanis Obomsawin documentary *Trick or Treaty?* (2014) For an image of the Haudenosaunee Flag, see [https://thecord.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/idle-no-more\\_tamara-herman-flickr\\_original.jpg](https://thecord.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/idle-no-more_tamara-herman-flickr_original.jpg); accessed 1 September 2016. For the Nishnawe Aski Nation, see <http://wpmedia.news.nationalpost.com/2013/01/spence-1.jpg?quality=65&strip=all>; accessed 1 September 2016. The Warrior Flag can be seen here: <https://www.thestar.com/content/dam/thestar/opinion/commentary/2015/08/17/why-mohawks-dont-vote-in-federal-elections/idlenomore.jpg.size.custom.crop.1086x687.jpg>; accessed 1 September 2016.

this flag became widely known in 1990 following the national media's coverage of the 'Oka Crisis' in Quebec, discussed in Chapter 1. According to Doxtater, the Warrior Flag is viewed by Mohawks, and Indigenous peoples more broadly, as a symbol that "represents resistance to assimilation and the assertion of an Indigenous way of looking at the world that is separate and distinct from the ones that the colonial states have attempted to impose" (98) that, she observes, "is firmly rooted in Indigenous values, characterized by a connected relationship, to one another and to the land" (Ibid.).

Just as during the 2002 clashes at a lobster fishery in Esgenoopetitj (Burnt Church) New Brunswick over Mi'kmaq fishing rights, or the Six Nations of the Grand River's blockade against a housing development near Caledonia, Ontario, in 2006, the Warrior Flag would become a ubiquitous feature of the 2012-2013 protests of Idle No More. It would be present not only at Aboriginal Experiences, but at marches and rallies across the country.

Akin to Warren's sign on Parliament Hill - "OH CANADA YOUR HOME ON STOLEN NATIVE LAND" - these flags represented the repudiation of settler myths characterising Canada as *terra nullius*. As Billig observes, "[t]he issue is wider than that of flags. It concerns national identity and its assumed naturalness in the established nation-state" (45); in carrying these flags, carried by Indigenous bodies during the INM protests, Indigenous individuals intervene in the colonial present, directly challenging the state's narrations of a unified Canadian (settler) identity as storied, for example, during the War of 1812 bicentennial.

Through the Idle No More movement, Indigenous peoples collectively asserted not Canadian, but Indigenous nationhood and sovereignties. This is

not to imply that all Indigenous peoples, whether involved in INM or not, do not align their individual identity through or alongside state configurations of Canadian citizenship; definitions of the self are rarely so clear-cut. The concept and history of citizenship warrants discussion, as it is encumbered with the political and historical baggage of Canada as a settler state.

“Citizenship”, writes legal scholar Darlene Johnston (a member of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation), “conjoins up notions of freedom and autonomy, the right to participate, a sense of belonging. [...] However, for the First Nations over whom Canada asserts jurisdiction, the experience of Canadian citizenship has been somewhat less than ennobling” (349). As Dale Turner observes, however, despite Canadian citizenship being tied to a long history of assimilation policies,<sup>102</sup> “many if not most Aboriginal people see themselves as Canadian citizens, but many see themselves as citizens of an [I]ndigenous nation *in addition* (and often prior to) being citizens of Canada” (*This* 42; italics in original). Turner emphasises that “Aboriginal political identities are multinational” (*Ibid.*), and can accommodate multiple and often conflicting national stories.

Taiaiake Alfred, in contrast, emphatically rejects the idea that one can identify as being both Indigenous and Canadian, arguing that such identification constitutes adoption of a false consciousness, or what he views as the “loss of consciousness” for a “sense of [I]ndigenous nationhood” (*Peace* xxi):

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<sup>102</sup> See also Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta’s (2009) study examining federal post-war citizenship programmes between the 1940s and into the 1960s for examples of how the state “deliberately constructed Aboriginal peoples as ‘immigrants too’ and targeted both ‘Canada’s original inhabitants’ and newly arrived European refugees and immigrants with similar ‘Canadianization’ programs” (427).

In fact, a lot of our Native people imagine themselves to be Canadians. [...] [T]hose Canadianized Indians are ‘in the darkness’; they’ve had their eyes shut to their true being, they can’t envision a future in which we are nations. They can’t see a positive future; they’re wallowing in the pain of being dependent wards of the Canadian state. (Ibid.)

Kristina Fagan criticises Alfred’s position for being “overly simplistic; Aboriginal people are presented as either traditional nationalists or assimilated sellouts” (“Tewatatha:wi” 25). Like Turner, Fagan concludes that “[f]or most Aboriginal people, [...], the issue is not so black and white” (Ibid.). I will not attempt to tease out the complex and varied nation-specific and place-based negotiations involved in Indigenous understandings of nationhood here, although I return to these debates later. It is worth highlighting, however, the complexities of Indigenous identities beyond the usual issues of contemporary identity politics. As Bonita Lawrence writes:

Identity, for Native people, can never be a neutral issue. With definitions of Indianness deeply embedded within systems of colonial power, Native identity is inevitably highly political, with ramifications for how contemporary and historical collective experience is understood. For Native people, individual identity is always being negotiated in relation to collective identity, and in the face of an external, colonizing society. (“*Real*” 1)

For this reason, practices of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty, which call into question the legitimacy of settler settlement and call attention to its violence, not peacefulness, are viewed as antagonistic to official narratives of Canadian national identity, and must accordingly be either silenced or co-

opted into narratives of a united and multicultural Canada (an official policy in 1971 and enshrined as law in 1988), which Indigenous scholars, such as Audra Simpson posit as a “corporeally violent way of managing Indians and their difference” (*Mohawk* 20).

It is crucial, therefore, that we consider how Indigenous understandings of nationalism are separate from concepts of Euro-Western nationalism “that has given birth to industrialized nation-states” (Justice, ““Go Away”” 151). When the INM movement outlines its goals as seeking “to help build sovereignty & resurgence of nationhood” (INM, “Vision”) what is being highlighted is that Indigenous nationalism is a “nationalism unto itself” (Ladner, “Women” 35). Writing in 2000, Kiera Ladner explains:

[W]e have to venture forward and begin the process of decolonising and deconstructing the dominant Eurocentric understanding of politics, and begin to see and understand Indigenous nations and Indigenous nationalisms as nation and nationalisms in their own right and as separate from the dominant, essentialist, western Eurocentric paradigm. (Ibid. 36-37)

Ladner’s argument that settler society has long defined Indigenous nationalism through the prism of Euro-Western intellectual traditions is revealed in the writing of *Globe and Mail* (non-Indigenous) journalist Jeffrey Simpson. In an article published in 2009, he states that, “[w]e have been living a myth in [A]boriginal policy: that ‘nations,’ [...], can be effective ‘sovereign’ entities” (“First Nations”). “When the population of a ‘nation’ is a few hundred people, or even a few thousand, we are kidding ourselves, [A]boriginal or non-[A]boriginal, if we think that sovereignty can be anything more than partial”

(Ibid.). Simpson's remarks divulge not just a settler misunderstanding of history, but the neglect of history. Indigenous sovereignty has not only been confirmed in numerous decisions from the Supreme Court, but it is enshrined in the Canadian Constitution and recognised in treaties.

The nature in which settler society approaches and engages in discussions of Indigenous nationalism and sovereignty serves as a barometer of progress in the process of reconciliation between settlers and Indigenous Canadians. Without understanding how Indigenous nationalism and nationhood is intrinsically tied to land, the history of the IRS system will continue, as during the 2008 apology, to be detached from the larger colonial drive of the state to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their lands. Leanne Simpson makes this relationship clear:

The dispossession of Indigenous peoples from our homelands is the root cause of every problem we face whether it is missing or murdered Indigenous women, fracking, pipelines, deforestation, mining, environmental contamination or social issues as a result of imposed poverty. ("Fracking")

With Ladner's work in mind, I now turn to some key concepts underpinning Indigenous scholarship on Indigenous nationalism, with a focus on Canada. This is an important component of any discussion of Idle No More, and Chief Spence's hunger strike, as it further renders visible how Indigenous bodies are uncomfortable mirrors to settler society.

My examination is by no means exhaustive. As an outsider, this is complex terrain for me to map out. I begin, though, with the fact that there is no single definition of Indigenous nationalism, nationhood, or sovereignty.

Informed by distinctive place-based practices, laws, protocols, and ceremonies that are adhered to and negotiated in the homelands of specific Indigenous nations, these are concepts that are articulated, and lived, in different ways according to different nations and individuals.

The aim of this section is to not brush over these differences. A commonality that does arise from this field, however, is the notion that Indigenous sovereignty and nationalism/nationhood exists in opposition to the nation-states. Andrea Smith sees this as being “based on control over territory” (qtd. in Arvin et. al 16). Daniel Heath Justice similarly contends that, “[p]eoplehood, nationhood, nationalism: in Indigenous contexts [...] are often *very* different from the assimilative and assaultive consumerist patriotism that fuels the nation-state” (“Relevant” 63; italics in original.). Bearing this in mind, I seek to prioritise Indigenous perspectives that de-centre the state in articulations of Indigenous self-hood; I start with the concept of sovereignty.

The term ‘sovereignty’ has been widely debated in Indigenous scholarship. As the editors of *Native Studies Keywords* (2015) observe, it is a word that many people, “say that they support [...] without ever explaining what sovereignty entails” (Ibid.). A distinction ought to be drawn, however, between settler conceptions and Indigenous understandings of sovereignty. Writing in the context of Australia, Indigenous scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson explores what she defines as “patriarchal white sovereignty” (2011). She defines this as “a sense of belonging and ownership produced by a possessive logic” of control and domination (59). This logic is embodied and performed by “the white male subject” and is “manifested in the form of the Crown and judiciary” (Ibid.). It is enforced through the illegal possession of

Indigenous territories, and dependent on the continued denial of Indigenous sovereignty (Ibid.). Moreton-Robinson's analysis is relevant to Canada because Australia is also a settler state, its story resonating with that of how sovereignty is conceptualised in the nation-state of Canada as seen through Bill C-45, for example. Just as in Australia, in Canada sovereignty is undermined by the state.

This is apparent in the way in which the treaties are understood by settler society in Canada; as historic artefacts with little contemporary relevance. As Leanne Simpson observes, "Canadians are taught that treaties are legal agreements through which Indians ceded our lands for cash. The Canadian characterization of treaties is almost like a receipt for a business transaction" (*Dancing* 106). This is an important point in the context of the Idle No More movement, the proponents of which argue that the nation-to-nation relationship, which still serves as the basis of settler-Indigenous relations, as expressed in the treaties, is being undermined by the Canadian government. As the manifesto of Idle No More states:

The Treaties are nation to nation agreements between First Nations and the British Crown who are sovereign nations. The Treaties are agreements that cannot be altered or broken by one side of the two Nations. The spirit and intent of the Treaty agreements meant that First Nations peoples would share the land, but retain their inherent rights to lands and resources. ("Manifesto")

The historic treaties (made between 1701 and 1923) are based on principles of non-interference and mutual respect between both parties. A series of legal documents entered into in the early days of contact, they stipulate agreements



to share the land and its resources, and to recognise Indigenous nations as self-governing entities.<sup>103</sup> As scholars Michael Asch and Norman Zlotkin observe, Indigenous peoples view historic treaties as living documents; not “as fixed contracts, but rather as a means of establishing ongoing political and legal relationships between Aboriginal collectivities and the Crown” (216). The signatories to the treaties are equal sovereign entities, entering into an agreement so as to make alliances of mutual benefit to both peoples, based on the principle of peaceful co-existence; not a relationship of colonial rule.<sup>104</sup>

In contrast to Euro-Western interpretations of the term, grounded in a discourse of rights and ownership, for many Indigenous scholars, sovereignty is defined as a lived responsibility - one that is lived outside the control and grip of the Canadian government. It is the right of Indigenous nations to conduct their own affairs, and for individuals to make decisions regarding their lands and bodies, on their “own terms, without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory or the opinions of Canadians” (L. Simpson, *Dancing* 17). When Indigenous peoples speak of sovereignty, “a translation process” thus takes place (Monture-Angus 35-36).

According to Patricia Monture-Angus, “the Aboriginal request to have our sovereignty respected is really a request to be responsible. I do not know of anywhere else in history where a group of people have had to fight so hard just to be responsible” (Ibid. 36). Instead of applying the word sovereignty, she offers “tewatatha:wi”, which translates as “we carry ourselves” (Ibid.). For

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<sup>103</sup> The Attawapiskat Cree Nation was among the last to enter in the ‘numbered’ treaties signed between Canada and Indigenous nations between the 1870s until the 1930s. In 1905, Attawapiskat signed Treaty No. 9.

<sup>104</sup> Patricia Monture-Angus explores how this relationship is exemplified in the Haudenosaunee Two-Row Wampum covenant, which records an agreement made in 1613 between Haudenosaunee nations and the Dutch nation in visual terms in the form of a belt (37).

Monture-Angus, “tewatatha:wi” is a sense of “responsibility to carry ourselves; collectively as nations, as clans, as families as well as individually, as individual Mohawk citizens in a good way” (Ibid.). For Sharon Venne (Cree Nation) “[s]overeignty is not a foreign concept brought by colonizers to Indigenous America. We are born as sovereign beings. Our struggle as sovereign peoples is to live the laws of the Creation” (qtd. in A. Smith, *Christian* 261).

Audra Simpson presents a different view. She emphasises that unlike nationhood, which is “the *being* of who we are”, sovereignty is one of the “defence mechanisms that we have to adopt in the neo-colonial context” (in Alfred, *Peace* 66; italics in original). For Simpson, sovereignty “[is] not part of being, the way our form of nationhood is. It has to be conferred, or granted - it’s a thing that can be given and thus can be taken away” (Ibid.). This argument is elucidated in her work *Mohawk Interruptus* (2014), discussed in Chapter 1. Simpson documents how sovereignty, specifically, for example, for many Iroquois, is about mobility. This is practiced through the exercise of moving across the line of the Canada-US border, a line that cuts across and into their territory, by using passports not from either nation-state, but issued by the Haudenosaunee; in so doing, Indigenous sovereignty is declared and put into an embodied practice. As Lenni-Lenape scholar Joanne Barker observes, although “[s]overeignty carries the horrible stench of colonialism [...] it has also been rearticulated to mean different things by [I]ndigenous peoples” (26). It is better not to think of ‘sovereignty’ in the singular, therefore, but ‘sovereignties’ in their plural form.

Like sovereignty, Indigenous nationhood is an embodied practice; one that, as Indigenous scholars frequently emphasise, seeks to disembody the nation-state from Indigenous nations. This is captured by Leanne Simpson when she states, “I am not a nation-state, nor do I strive to be one” (“I Am”). Similarly, Alfred rejects the state’s power over Indigenous nations, and therefore over Indigenous lands and bodies. He stresses that “[t]he first and most important objective” for Indigenous peoples is to “deny the state’s legitimacy in theoretical and concrete ways” (*Wasáse* 56). To this end, Alfred advances the argument that Indigenous nationalism is about rejecting Euro-Western concepts of nationhood and sovereignty, and restoring ancestral values through the recovery of Indigenous governance structures over their homelands and rejecting settler-based understandings of nationhood (*Peace* xiv).

Indigenous scholars also define nationhood as predicated on a relational understanding of land; that “land occupies as an ontological framework for understanding relationships” (Coulthard 60; italics in original). The specific protocols informing with whom such relationships are built and nurtured varies from Indigenous nation to Indigenous nation. These relations are not only with neighbouring nations of human beings, however. As Andrea Smith writes, “the buffalo or, the wolves, the fish, the trees, [...] all are nations” (“Why” 243).

In this context, “nationism” is a more appropriate term than “nationalism” when emphasising the kinds of kinship relations described above (Justice, “Relevant” 64). As Daniel Heath Justice writes, “Indigenous nationhood is more than simple political independence or the exercise of a

distinctive cultural identity; it is also an understanding of a common social interdependence within the community” (*Our* 24). He articulates a conception of nationhood as a relationship that “extends beyond the human to encompass other people, from the plants and animals to the sun, moon, thunder, and other elemental forces” (Ibid.). Literary scholar Craig Womack writes of the importance of stories in his definition of nationhood; “[n]ationhood recognizes spiritual practices, since culture is part of what gives people an understanding of their uniqueness, their difference, from other nations of people” (*Red* 60). His work focuses on the role of Indigenous literatures in “what constitutes the idea of nationhood”, as “people formulate a notion of themselves as an imagined community through stories” (Ibid.). These include stories of relationships between nations; nation-to-nation relationships as storied relationships (see also L. Simpson 2011) - a different understanding of story to that of the nation-state, described in terms of relations between equals, not top-down instruction.

Finally, it is important to note that Indigenous nationism, as lived in a nation-state, is also about resisting the state’s desire to bring Indigenous peoples into the fold of its economic capitalist norms. As Scott Richard Lyons (Leech Lake Ojibwe) observes, “this relationship [to the land] is made truly meaningful by a consistent cultural refusal to interact with that land as private property or purely exploitable resource. Land, culture, and community are inseparable in Indian country” (248). This idea of living on the land in non-capitalist ways informs much Indigenous scholarship and activism concerned with Indigenous nationism, nationalism, and sovereignty that seeks to honour, in the words of Louis Owens (Choctaw-Cherokee) “sacred places that bear the

bones and stories that tell them who they are, where they come from, and how to live in the world they see around them” (164).

Glen Coulthard (Dene) also argues that land is crucial to Indigenous identity not only in a material sense. He writes that “the theory and practice of Indigenous anticolonialism” is “a struggle not only *for* land [...], but also deeply *informed* by what the land *as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations* can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitive terms” (13; italics in original). This leads Coulthard to the stark conclusion that “[f]or Indigenous nations to live, capitalism must die. And for capitalism to die, we must actively participate in the construction of Indigenous alternatives to it” (173).

Idle No More, therefore, is a protest movement dedicated to claiming nationhood in the public sphere, and of unsettling the national story. I now turn to the question of how Spence’s hunger strike performed this; her starving body, against a landscape that tells the story of Canada’s genocide, bringing the colonial present into sharp relief.

#### **Part IV: The Disappearing Act of Theresa Spence**

On the eleventh day of her protest, Chief Spence gave an interview from her tepee on Victoria Island in which she traced an interconnected and intergenerational personal history of pain. An eagle feather in hand, she began by mapping out how her life was affected by the residential school system.<sup>105</sup> Spence explains how her early life, an “enjoyed” life, was violently disrupted when at the age of six she was forcefully sent to a residential school (in

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<sup>105</sup> Spence went to St. Anne’s residential school in Fort Albany First Nation, the school discussed in the Introduction through my analysis of the *We Live at School* pamphlet.

Belcourt). She describes how her experience of “always feeling alone and not loved” led her to blame her mother, also a residential school survivor, who had withheld affection from Spence (Ibid.). Spence describes this trauma as “part of our [Indigenous] life”, which remains “a chapter” that cannot be closed (Ibid.). This pain that “doesn’t seem want to go away” manifests itself in each new generation: “It’s not a good life, and [this] generation deserve[s] a secure life and a life of freedom. Not a life of pain and fear, what we went through in our generation” (Ibid.).

Spence’s description of her experience of historical pain serves as a rejection of the Euro-Western ‘accident model’ of trauma, which maintains that “trauma results from a single, extraordinary, catastrophic event” (Craps 31). As Stef Craps argues, this event-based approach to trauma not only marginalises subaltern experiences of trauma, but also fails to “account for and respond to collective, ongoing, everyday forms of traumatizing violence” (4). As Cynthia C. Wesley-Esquimaux (Chippewa) observes: “For First Nations people loss of their cultural identity was not an abrupt event, but continued in one form or another through centuries of pain and suffering” (23). Nancy Van Styvendale proposes the concept of “trans/historicity”, a term she applies to “challenge the very assumption of trauma as rooted in event” (204), and as a way in which to consider “the effects of colonial oppression on Native communities” (207). She argues that as a theoretical model it “gestures toward a trauma that takes place and is repeated in multiple epochs”, which “exceeds its historicity, conventionally understood as its singular location in the past” (Ibid.).

The model of trauma that Styvendale advances in her work, of a “temporal and spatial dis/location of a trauma that is centuries old and nations wide” (204), is limited to an analysis of its articulation in Native North American literature. But this idea of trauma being marked corporeally by history has been taken up by other scholars. For example, Leanne Simpson describes how “colonialism has heaped on our people for hundreds of years and is now carried within our bodies, minds and our hearts” (*Dancing* 14). Similarly, Quo-Li Driskill (Cherokee) argues that “[c]olonization is a kinaesthetic reality: it is an act done by bodies and felt by other bodies. Violence is not an intellectual knowledge, but rather one that is known because of damage done to our skin, flesh, muscles, bones and spirits” (155). Driskill concludes that “[i]t is both our homelands and our bodies that are violated through colonization” (Ibid.).

The pain outlined by Spence is not hers alone, but an accumulative pain compounded, she notes in the interview, by witnessing Indigenous youth continuing to live with the consequences of the IRS system. Exhaling heavily, Spence states that “[a]s a woman, I feel that pain, [...] when you have that pain it goes all over your body. In your heart and it’s so much that you can’t take no more” (in Belcourt). Colonial trauma is therefore an embodied trauma carried by the body and storied into the land. For Spence, it is a burden “too heavy” to bear (Ibid.).

Spence’s citation of pain aligns with scholar Elaine Scarry’s description of how “[p]hysical pain has no voice, but when it at last finds a voice, it begins to tell a story” (3). Scarry articulates how the extremes of bodily pain are an experience of a “world unmaking, this uncreating of the

created world” (45). This is an “intense pain that destroys a person’s self and world, a destruction experienced spatially”, one that “is also language-destroying: as the content of one’s world disintegrates, so the content of one’s language disintegrates” (Ibid. 35). This is particularly acute because pain has no external referential object. As Scarry notes, “it is not *of* or *for* anything” (5; italics in original), rather it is internalised, an experience of intelligibility. It marks the very limits of verbal communication, as “[p]hysical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it” (4). Individualised pain cannot be confirmed or denied; it is for these reason that “[w]hatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability” (Ibid. 4). This process of internalisation makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for others wholly to understand another’s pain: “[t]o have pain is to have *certainty*; to hear about pain is to have *doubt*” (Ibid. 13; italics in original).

Patrick Anderson introduces his analysis of the politics of self-imposed starvation by noting that self-starvation is “[o]ne of the most recognizable and diagnosable symptoms of what has historically been called a nervous disorder, self-starvation has simultaneously been an extremely disturbing and yet alluring culture practice to behold” (2). His central argument is that this particular form of political expression is one that fundamentally stages a subject’s political agency, both as object and agent of this practice. Anderson explains this is because it “[pushes] the limits of the climatic vanishing point of human possibility, embracing the potential of *disappearance* for the experience of *becoming*” (Ibid.; italics in original). He sees the public act of fasting as one that “stages the event of *subjectivation*”, achieved “through a radical and paradoxical embrace of mortality” (Ibid 3; italics in original.):



[S]elf-starvation conceptually and methodologically obtains its significance as cultural practice not simply in gesturing toward absence, but in viscerally and affectively summoning us to bear witness to the long, slow wasting away of human flesh. (Ibid.)

Similarly, Maud Ellmann argues that “[s]elf-starvation is above all a performance. Like Hamlet’s mouse-trap, it is staged to trick the conscience of its viewers, forcing them to recognize that they are implicated in the spectacle that they behold” (17). This is because this form of self-harm specifically requires “the gaze of others” and “depends upon the other as spectator in order to be *read* as representative of anything at all” (Ibid.). Lucy Nevitt frames the practice as one that embraces a “spectacle of harm”, observing that “deliberate starvation can appear to be a violence of inaction, although witnesses are unlikely to escape the awareness of the strength required to maintain inactivity in this context” (64); Nevitt asserts that “[h]unger strikes are durational spectacles” in which:

Witnesses judge suffering by its appearance on the body of the victim. As the effects of slow starvation become more physically apparent, many witnesses may be provoked to imagine the sensations associated with such physical suffering. This act of imagination, when it happens, is an act of engagement in which the victim is perceived as an individual and as a fellow human. (Ibid.)

Seeking “to hold the body up for ransom, to make mortality into a bargaining chip” (Ellmann 17), hunger striking endeavours to stage the inverse of state power as outlined in Louis Althusser’s theory of interpellation. Althusser explains his concept by offering an example of a street scene

whereby a police officer shouts “Hey, you there!” at a subject. If the subject chooses to turn around, they are hailed into existence and thus disciplined and subjected to the authority’s ideology (P. Anderson 4). A hunger strike is a practice that “produces power” (Ibid. 12) insofar as the body becomes a visible site of resistance against the state. In moving closer to a public and willed death, the subject demands that spectators witnessing the spectacle turn towards the subject and participate in a moment of acknowledgement - of the precariousness, the vulnerability, of the starving body (Butler, *Frames* 13-14).

In abstaining from the consumption of food, Deirdre Conlon writes that hunger strikers: “Enact the right to question how one is governed, which, is, at once, to recognize and realize the logic of governmentality while simultaneously refusing its form or means in a particularly situation” (qtd. in Walsh 204-205). It is for these reasons that hunger strikes are “so dramaturgically compelling” (Ibid. 203). They are “a strange adventure in seduction” (Ellmann 17), in which the body becomes the locus of meaning in a performance that depends on “the wordless testimony of the famished flesh” (Ibid.). It is a performance staged in the hope that their disappearing act will solicit movement from its witnesses - a possible societal, empathetic and compassionate turning that, at the very least, engenders a collective reckoning from the spectators, who ask: “Are we complicit? Can we work to end violence, or will we go on ‘just looking’?” (D. Taylor, *Disappearing* xi)

The alternative is that the spectators will turn away. In both cases, as Diana Taylor reminds us, “‘looking’ is always an intervention, whether we like it, or accept it, or not. Not intervening, turning away, is its own form of intervention” (Ibid. 264). The form of Spence’s protest is thus a significant

embodied performative act, one that insists on its audience to recognise their place and complicity in her disappearing body.

Some people did look away, however, the doubt inherent in observing someone else's pain leading some to call into question the authenticity of the hunger strike as a legitimate socio-political intervention. The public's apprehension of Spence's pain as she moved closer to death was eclipsed by vocal discussions from certain quarters of the settler public as to whether Spence was *really* starving her body of food. As the strike progressed, the national media's coverage of Spence's ordeal became increasingly vicious, placing her intentions, and her body, under intense scrutiny (Burelle 2013; A. Simpson 2016).

An "act of imagination", as Nevitt describes above, that might have led to a potential national "colonial reckoning" (Henderson and Wakeham 2009) as people considered why Spence was choosing a self-willed death, was displaced by questions concerning the legitimacy of her performance; specifically, why her flesh was not wasting away fast enough (A. Simpson 2016). Populist and right wing media outlets, most notably the *Sun News Network*, were at the forefront of disseminating gendered fat shaming assaults on Chief Spence's body. In 2013, the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN)<sup>106</sup> reported that the Sun News Network had held an online contest for descriptions of Chief Spence. These included: "fat, oink, garbage, chief two-chins, hippo", with one submission stating "stop sucking Lysol" (Piapot). *Toronto Sun* journalist Peter Worthington penned an article with the headline "Starved for Attention", remarking that Chief Spence "looks as plump as she

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<sup>106</sup> Launched in 1999, APTN is an independent television broadcaster, which according to the company is "the first national Aboriginal television network in the world with programming by, for and about Aboriginal peoples" ("Five").

did when she started it.” Ezra Levant, a columnist and former television host of Sun News Network released a video “fact checking” Spence’s protest, in which he labels her “as a master media manipulator”, and refers to her protest as a “so-called hunger strike” (“Fact”). In this video, he states: “Is she really hunger striking? I mean twenty-three days without food, forgive me for saying it, she still looks well fed, and I say this as a fellow fatty” (Ibid.).

This misogynistic ridicule of Spence’s flesh not wasting away fast enough was echoed by Conservative politicians, and documented in the press. In late January 2013, Senator Patrick Brazeau (a former Algonquin chief) boasted at an election campaign fundraising event in Ottawa that he had lost more weight when he was sick with the flu. When Brazeau declared, “I look at Miss Spence, when she started her hunger strike, and now?” a heckler shouted, “[s]he’s fatter” (qtd. in Hunt). According to a local community paper, this interjection “drew laughter from much of the audience” (Hunt). Not to be outdone by Brazeau, Ottawa-Orléans Conservative MP Royal Galipeau described to the audience how he had been able to sneak into Victoria Island during Spence’s protest, “because he wasn’t recognized as a Conservative MP”; he recalled: “I stood in the circle around Chief Spence” and “noticed that manicure of hers. I tell you Anne can’t afford it”, referring to his spouse (Ibid.; see also A. Simpson 2016).

Various media commentators framed Spence’s six-week protest as a ‘liquid diet,’ a ‘liquid diet-fast,’ a ‘detox’, or a ‘soup-fish’ diet. Such voices contended that by drinking fish broth and medicinal tea, Spence was not staging a *real* hunger strike, like that of Irish nationalist Bobby Sands, whose 66-day hunger strike resulted in his death in 1981, whilst incarcerated

(Worthington). This view was crystallised by Barbara Kay, who in writing for the *National Post* accused Spence of not being “quite so gaunt and sickly”:

Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence seems to have a different understanding of what a hunger strike is. She is living on water and ‘fish broth.’ Although liquid, fish broth is *food*. More specifically, it’s protein and fat. And, as any devotee of those trendy low-carb regimes will know, that’s all you need to live on ... indefinitely. (Italics and ellipsis in original)

Spence’s body, her embodied life and integrity, is rendered here as without worth; her demand that the federal and provincial governments respect Indigenous treaty rights was deemed irrelevant. What was lost in these debates of whether she was undertaking a *real* strike was why she was drinking fish broth in the first place (Burelle 2013; A. Simpson 2016). Leanne Simpson argues that “Spence is eating fish broth because metaphorically, colonialism has kept Indigenous Peoples on a fish broth diet for generation upon generations” (“Fish” 155).

Spence’s intervention was calling attention to the politics of starvation as experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada. Through hunger striking, Spence was using her body to render visible, and to mirror, the violence of the colonial settler state. Embodying Achille Mbembe’s concept of “necropower”, the defining power of the sovereign, of deciding who is to live or be exposed to death (11), and the state’s complicity in creating what Mbembe articulates as “the creation of *death-worlds*, [the] new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*” (40; italics in original). In this

context, the setting of her public hunger strike, staged in a tepee at Victoria Island in full view of Parliament Hill, is particularly potent. She was showing to the Canadian public that her ultimate fate remained in the hands of the Canadian government. Spence was staging her own body as a stand-in for historical and ongoing violence of the state creating death-worlds for Indigenous peoples. This is what Pamela Palmater attempted to communicate to Canada when she argued that the hunger strike of Chief Spence is “symbolic of what is happening to First Nations in Canada. For every day, that Spence does not eat, she is slowly dying, and that is exactly what is happening to First Nations” (“Why”).

The issue of starvation is especially pertinent for Indigenous peoples living in the high Arctic. Inuit communities struggle with chronic food insecurity; recent studies suggest nearly 70 per cent of adults living in Nunavut experience food insecurity. This is “six times higher than the Canadian national average and represents the highest documented food insecurity prevalence rate for any Aboriginal population residing in a developed country” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami). These high rates are recorded throughout the North, the afterlife of events in the 1950s and 1960s, when the federal government forcibly re-located Inuit communities to new settlements where there was not enough game to continue to hunt and live off the land, imposing upheaval and disrupting traditional Inuit ways of life. Despite Canada being one of the wealthiest countries in the world, this history of starvation repeats itself through these food shortages, compounded by limited access to food due to extreme costs, illustrating that “[p]eople starve because they *have* no food, not

because there *is* no food, and [that] the problem therefore, is ‘entitlement’ to food, rather than its notional availability” (Ellmann 52; italics in original).

The history of Indigenous starvation in the country also runs through the residential school system and the enforced pass system that was introduced in 1886, and instituted across western Canada, lasting for over 60 years.

Although not officially recognised under the Indian Act, the pass system was part of the same structure of racialisation that allowed for it to be extra-legally enforced in the first place. Indigenous peoples were forced to procure a pass from an Indian Agent if they wished to leave the reserve, whereby they were obliged to give information about the purpose of their leave and its duration. If apprehended without the document, an individual could be sent to prison, assisting with the IRS system’s aim of separating Indigenous families from their children. Sharon Venne writes:

With the pass system Indigenous peoples could not travel outside the reserves to hunt, and starvation became a reality [...]. The people were forced into dependence on the Ottawa-appointed Indian agent for food rations or a pass. If the people refused to send their children to school, there was no food and no pass. It became a choice between allowing the children to starve or sending them to school they would be fed.

(“Understanding” 195)

As Ian Mosby has shown, children also suffered from hunger and rampant malnutrition at many of these schools too; thousands were deliberately starved in the 1940s and 1950s. Mosby’s 2013 study, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952” documents the

Canadian government's practice of subjecting children and adults to biomedical nutritional experimentation in residential schools and in reserve communities, often done without their knowledge or consent.

James Daschuk's *Clearing the Plains* (2013) traces what he calls "the politics of famine" (xix) in Western Canada within a larger historical context, including an analysis of how the rapid decline of bison, an important food source, led to the starvation of Indigenous communities. Daschuk contends that "[t]he chasm between the health conditions of First Nations people and mainstream Canada [...] has become part of who we are as a nation" (ix), and concludes that communities subjected to policies of starvation from the eighteenth and nineteenth century has directly impacted the dire present-day health of these communities. Daschuk cites the example of how after the Dominion of Canada's land purchase from Hudson's Bay Company in 1869, starvation policies were enforced so as to prepare the plains for mass settler settlement and to make way for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (1881-1885), documenting how the building of the national railways took place through intended "ethnic cleaning of southwestern Saskatchewan of its [I]ndigenous population" (123) through enforced starvation from state officials.

Despite this, the transcontinental railway remains a central iconographic and romanticised image in the national imaginary; its completion in 1885 thrusting Canada into an industrial age of progress and expansion. As Daniel Francis writes, "it has become over the years a great 'Canadian' achievement and a symbol of the bonds which unite us as a people"; "a train is, or at least was, much more than a train. It is seen as a visible expression of



the determination to exist as a country” (*National* 15-16). This determination to exist as a nation continues to take place through making Indigenous bodies disappear, whether in the industrialised making of Canada as a nation, or in the production of its national myths, or in the production of its laws.

The ridicule directed at Spence’s appearance during her protest on Victoria Island is also indicative of deeper power dynamics of sexual colonial violence that systematically seek out Indigenous women; forcing them to conform, accept their subjugation, or be beaten into submission or death (A. Simpson 2016). Judith Butler’s investigations into how and why some individual bodies, but not others, are made to matter in life, and made grievable in death, in the national imaginary are important here. Examining how “[t]he body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency”, and engaging with the ways in which “the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence” (*Frames* 26), her theorisations are specifically attuned to ethical questions regarding responsiveness. Situating the body as belonging to the public sphere, Butler emphasises how this exposure brings the body to physical harm and normative violence, arguing that “[t]he body has its invariably public dimension. Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is mine and is not mine” (Ibid.).

It is in the public domain that the intelligibility, the value, of certain lives is demarcated. This attribution precedes a life, however. It is a “presupposition” that conditions a subject’s life and death (Ibid. 14-15). Butler explains that “a life has to be intelligible *as a life*, has to conform to certain conceptions of what life is, in order to become recognizable” (*Precarious* 7; italics in original). Without meeting normative registers of recognition in life,

the Other becomes a body that in death “cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never ‘were,’ and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness” (Ibid. 33). These bodies, made abject, are deemed as unworthy of grief in public life:

[C]ertain forms of grief become nationally recognized and amplified, whereas other losses become unthinkable and ungrievable. [...] Some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human: what counts as a livable and a grievable death. (Ibid. xiv-xv)

This violence is actuated through the colonising white male gaze.

Reaffirming colonial relations are thus encoded through what Jane Gaines describes, in her analysis of feminist film theory, as “looking relations” (1986), and which Ann Kaplan reformulates as “the looking *relation*” (xviii; italics in original). Kaplan explains:

The gaze is active: the subject bearing the gaze is not interested in the object per se, but consumed with his (*sic*) own anxieties, which are inevitably intermixed with desire. There is no room within these anxieties for process. The sight produces anxiety which closes off process at once. The object is a threat to the subject’s autonomy and security and thus must be placed, rationalized, and by a circuitous route, denied. (Ibid.)

Although Elin Diamond argues that “[f]ilm semiotics posits a spectator who is given the illusion that he creates the film”, while “theatre semiotics posits a

spectator whose active reception constantly revises the spectacle's meanings" (qtd. in Gilbert and Tompkins 248), theorisations on the cinematic gaze are particularly instructive in the performance context of Spence's hunger striking body. These enable us to identify what Ella Shohat terms "the disciplinary gaze of empire" (1991), and to trace, as Kaplan notes, "the colonial habits of thought that underlie this [imperial] gaze" (60).

Much of the criticism of Spence's hunger strike should be understood in this context, as representative of an ongoing exercise of "training careful blindness" (Phelan qtd. in D. Taylor, *Disappearing* 120); of refusing to see how settler society was implicated in Theresa Spence's act of self-injury "aimed at the death of the subject" (P. Anderson 2; italics in original), was pursued.

Writing in the context of the brutality of Argentina's military junta in the nation's 'Dirty War,' Diana Taylor describes how the public was engaged in "*dangerous seeing* or illicit or unwilling witnessing that spectators want to avoid because it puts them at risk" (*Disappearing* 213; italics in original). She describes how "[t]he witnesses were reluctant witnesses; they didn't know and they didn't want to know, for not knowing became the source of their sense of well-being" (Ibid.). Taylor's analysis can be applied to the ongoing project of settler colonialism in Canada, which, I argue, is sustained through a specific looking relation that involves a twinned practice of both looking away and voyeuristically gazing at Indigenous bodies.

The settler male colonial gaze constructs Indigenous women through a process of what Aimé Césaire describes as "thingification" (42). Both are practices of settler colonial denial in the nation-building project. As already

discussed, this history is woven into the fabric of Canada, and so my following analysis will necessarily be selective. I limit my focus to the question of how the Indian Act and state policies control the fertility of Indigenous women; normalising the ways in which the settler public sees Indigenous women's bodies, including Spence's body, as not only "sexually violable and 'rapable'" (A. Smith, "Indian" 73), but also as inherently 'disappearable' (Burelle 2013; A. Simpson 2016). As Mishuana Goeman (Tonawanda Seneca) argues, "[c]olonialism is not just about conquering Native lands through mapping new ownerships, but it is also about the conquest of bodies, particularly women's bodies through sexual violence, and about recreating gendered relationships" (33).

Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson point out that "[t]he official story of gender inequality for Aboriginal women began more than 130 years ago, in 1876, when the Canadian Parliament amended the 1868 Indian Act to establish patrilineality as a criterion for determining Indian [S]tatus" (126-127).<sup>107</sup> Although the Indian Act continues to affect the lives both of Indigenous men and of Indigenous women in a severely detrimental fashion, this consolidated body of laws has historically targeted women through a number of measures leaving them with disproportionately fewer rights. These include: imposing patriarchal governance structures; taking away their property rights; prohibiting them from holding political office, and preventing them from voting on issues related to their community.<sup>108</sup> It also included stripping them of their Indian Status if they married a non-status

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<sup>107</sup> See Terminology section.

<sup>108</sup> Indigenous women regained the right to participate in the political affairs of their band council in the 1950s. In 1960, both Indigenous women and men were extended the right to vote in provincial and federal elections without losing their treaty rights and Indian Status.

Indian or white man; in the eyes of the Canadian government, the woman had ceased to be an 'Indian,' making it illegal for her either to reside or to be buried amongst her community (K. Anderson 68-69; Lawrence 2003). This latter provision affected thousands of Indigenous women and their children; it was only in 1985, with Bill C-31, that these gender discriminatory and exclusionary clauses were finally repealed. However, as Bonita Lawrence observes:

[W]hen Bill C-31 was passed in 1985, there were only 350,000 status Indians left in Canada [...]. Because Bill C-31 allowed individuals who had lost status and their children to regain it, approximately 100,000 individuals had regained their status by 1995 [...]. But the damage caused, demographically and culturally, by the loss of status of so many Native women for a century prior to 1985, whose grandchildren and great-grandchildren are now no longer recognized - and in many cases no longer identify - as Indian, remain incalculable. (*Gender* 9)

The loss of Indian Status was one of the ways in which the Indian Act has profoundly and forever altered Indigenous communities. The larger goal for colonial governments in enforcing the Indian Act was to dismantle matriarchal lines by removing women from political life, thereby disrupting and ultimately destroying Indigenous cultures, and therefore nations (A. Simpson 2016). As Catherine Martin (Mi'kmaw) writes:

In order to break down and destroy a culture, you have to get to the root of it. The heart of Aboriginal cultures is the women, as givers of life. So it makes sense to start making policies that would banish the women, the givers of language, culture and life. They are the ones who

bring Native children into world and teach them their way. It made sense to make a policy so that white women could come in and take over that role and start teaching the white ways. This was a form of cultural genocide. (qtd. in K. Anderson 70)

This is what Spence was referencing in her protest - that indigenous trauma is an extended experience, located in and transmitted through the body, with effects that are both personal and collective.

Another part of the state's assimilationist drive was carried out through legislated and non-legislated practices of "coercive sterilization" of Indigenous women, which included girls as young as 13 years of age being forced to undergo the procedure (Stote 2015). Although in the US, the sterilisation of Native American women was brought to light in the 1970s, in Canada "[t]he details of how this practice was carried out and its implications have yet to be acknowledged in the historical record" (Ibid. intro., location 153-155, par. 1).

Karen Stote's *An Act of Genocide: Colonialism and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women* (2015) is the first study to offer an in-depth analysis of this practice, adding another dimension to the story of what Himmani Bannerji has called "the dark side of the nation" (2000). According to Stote, the sterilisation of Indigenous women took place in several provinces, but it was only in British Columbia and Alberta that it was formally legislated. She documents how "[f]rom 1928 to 1973, at least three thousand people were sterilized in these two provinces under the direction of a provincially mandated Eugenics Board" (intro., location 162-163, par. 2). The procedure was often done without the patient's knowledge or consent; in cases when a consent form was presented, it was not translated into Indigenous languages. As Stote points out,

even if a form was signed, “the voluntary aspect of the decision must be questioned. This is particularly the case when Indigenous peoples are forced to live under conditions of colonialism and Western medicine is employed to assist in assimilation” (chap. 3, location 1827-1829, par. 1).

Carried out under the pretence of a humanitarian concern for the health of Indigenous women, Stote suggests that the federal government enacted the policy through a eugenic ideology, “that the less evolved were a threat to society and [that] this justified drastic intrusions in their lives” (Ibid., intro., location 158-159, par. 1). She maintains that the larger goal was to “reduce the number of those to whom the federal government has obligations” (Ibid., intro., location 236-237, par. 1). As reproducers of Indigenous kinship systems, Indigenous women “represented and continue to represent an impediment to the colonial project” (Ibid., intro., location 221, par. 1), encouraging the state to intervene so as to reduce the populations of Indigenous communities. This leads Stote to conclude that when considered within the larger context of Canada’s colonial history, including the century-long IRS system, this policy of sterilisation was an act of genocide.

Stote’s analysis also serves to illustrate how state violence inflicted upon Indigenous women’s bodies is intimately connected with the state’s theft of Indigenous lands, and how this theft was then articulated as both natural and justifiable. Andrea Smith argues that “it has been precisely through gender violence that [Indigenous peoples] have lost our lands in the first place” (“Native” 121). This is a similar argument to Stote’s, namely that the bodies of Indigenous women are perceived as threatening to settler society “because of their ability to reproduce the next generation of peoples who can resist

colonization”, and therefore, “control over women’s reproductive abilities and destruction of women and children are essential in destroying a people” (A. Smith, “Indian” 78).

It is important to note here that the policy of sterilisation is deeply intertwined with the perpetuation of racist stereotypes of Indigenous women. To legitimise their disappearance, Indigenous bodies had to be constructed by the state as dirty and sexually polluted, from which, as Andrea Smith notes, “the colonial body must purify itself” (Ibid. 72):

In the colonial imagination, Native bodies are [...] immanently polluted with sexual sin. [...] Because Indian bodies are ‘dirty,’ they are considered sexually violable and ‘rapable.’ That is, in patriarchal thinking, only a body that is ‘pure’ can be violated. The rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count. (73)

This notion appeared in grotesque fashion during Chief Spence’s hunger strike. On 27 December 2013, a rape and strangulation attempt that nearly killed an Indigenous woman took place in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Reports describe how she had been walking down a street in her neighbourhood when two Caucasian men pulled their car up beside her and began throwing objects and yelling racial epithets of “squaw and dirty Indian” (Belcourt qtd. in Galloway, “Thunder”). The men then dragged her into their vehicle and proceeded to beat and rape her. This brutal sexual assault occurred at the very same time that INM was calling for a formal inquiry into the over



1,200<sup>109</sup> missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada from 1980 to present day.<sup>110</sup> Despite numerous studies revealing systemic racism in the police force and juridical system, Harper repeatedly rejected the demand that his government establish a formal inquiry, arguing that it was a problem of crime and not a “sociological phenomenon” (qtd. in Boutilier).

Statistics reveal a different picture, however. As Lisa Monchalin documents:

Indigenous women are almost three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to become a victim of a violent crime in Canada. [...] Amnesty International reports that Indigenous women in Canada aged 25 to 44 are five times more likely than non-Indigenous Canadians in the same age group to die of violence. In 2014, the rate of homicide committed against Indigenous women was 3.64 per 100,000, compared to the rate for non-Indigenous women of 0.65 per 100,000 - a rate that is six times higher for Indigenous women. The Native Women’s Association of Canada reports that Indigenous women are almost three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be killed by a stranger. (175-176)

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<sup>109</sup> Indigenous activists and organisations, however, more routinely argue that there are gaps in police and government reporting, which, as a result, do not reflect what they estimate is a much higher number, one that is closer to 3,000 (Baum and Galloway).

<sup>110</sup> As a result of the attack, Indigenous women at the local high school in Thunder Bay were equipped with hand-held personal safety alarms. Many parents, however, chose not to send their children back to the school for the rest of the semester due to the reported rise of violent sexual assaults in the area that took place while the Idle No More protests were taking place (Porter, “First”). The attack was not an isolated incident, even in Thunder Bay. Professor Kristin Burnett at Lakehead University, which has its main campus in Thunder Bay, suggests that “[t]here’s a huge pattern of abductions that are taking place in Thunder Bay...that are going almost entirely unnoticed by both the police and the general public” (qtd. in Ibid., “Mother”; ellipses in original). In 2013, American researcher Christine Stark documented Indigenous women in Thunder Bay being trafficked on ships in the Duluth harbour in Minnesota: “Native women, teen girls and boys, and even babies have been sold for sex on the ships” (qtd. in D. Dean “Native”).

Harper's refusal to institute an inquiry aligned with his argument that Canada has "no history of colonialism" (qtd. in Wherry). Both stances seek to de-contextualise the disappearances and deaths of Indigenous women away from the gendered and sexual violence that goes hand-in-hand with the logic of settler colonialism (A. Simpson 2016).

By denying the need for an inquiry, Harper was implying that Indigenous women's lives and deaths are unimportant, ungrievable. This normalisation of indifference is sustained by similar reactions from other institutions, such as the Canadian Museum for Human Rights established in Winnipeg in 2008.<sup>111</sup> A month before the building opened its doors to the public in 2014, the lifeless body of a murdered fifteen year-old woman, Tina Fontaine from Sagkeeng First Nation, was found wrapped in a plastic bag and recovered from the Red River at the Alexander Docks, less than a kilometre away from the grounds of the museum. Two days later, close to 2,000 Indigenous peoples and settler allies gathered outside the museum publicly to grieve her death and to again demand an inquiry into the violent deaths of indigenous women. The museum responded with "public silence" (A. Dean 151).

When Spence declared that she would be undertaking a hunger strike, her protest was staging the very thing that Canada has historically sought to do to Indigenous peoples; to make their bodies, both metaphorically and materially, disappear from the landscape of the nation-state (Burelle 2013; A. Simpson 2016); an intention infamously articulated by former Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott,

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<sup>111</sup> The museum has been criticised for its refusal to apply the word 'genocide' to describe past human rights violations against Indigenous peoples in Canada; see A. Dean (2015); Dhamoon (2016); Moses (2012).

when he stated in 1920 regarding the IRS legislation that “[o]ur objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic” (qtd. in Regan, *Unsettling* 238n2).

Spence’s intervention re-enacted what Diana Taylor calls ‘a bad script’ (*Disappearing* 220), insofar as Spence was embodying the role projected by the state onto Indigenous bodies: that they remain a “permanent ‘present absence’ in the [Canadian] colonial imagination” (Shanley qtd. in A. Smith, “Indian” 72). Ella Shoat and Robert Stam describe this state as “a temporal paradox”, in which “living Indians were induced to ‘play dead,’ as it were, in order to perform a narrative of manifest destiny in which their role, ultimately, was to disappear” (qtd. in *Ibid.*). Spence’s hunger strike embodied these ongoing histories; presenting, by living, these histories so as to encourage settlers to confront the colonial past and present. Not only did her body become the site of resistance against the colonial state; her intervention refused to be defined by the colonial gaze, and refused to give into the settler colonial drive to make Indigenous women disappear (Burelle 2013; A. Simpson 2016). Sherene Razack writes:

To mark and maintain their own emplacement on stolen land, settlers must repeatedly enact the most enduring colonial truth: the land belongs to the settler, and Indigenous peoples who are in the city are not of the city. Marked as surplus and subjected to repeated evictions, Indigenous peoples are considered by settler society as the waste or excess that must be expelled. (*Dying* 23)

While elements of the media, along with the federal government, looked on with indifference or hostility towards Spence’s hunger strike, many

Indigenous peoples and settler allies were moved to act. Inspired by Chief Spence's commitment to confront Stephen Harper's Conservative government, solidarity fasts were staged in 2012-2013 in support of Spence, and petitions were signed demanding that Harper fulfil the spirit and intent of the treaty relationship. Thousands of bodies assembled in the streets, in shopping malls, and in front of the Parliament buildings to reclaim Indigenous spaces and to publicly re-assert Indigenous presence and nationhood on Indigenous lands, in dance, prayer, and ceremony across the country; cultural practices that under the Indian Act and throughout IRS system, the state sought to destroy.

These were, as Indigenous and settler scholars and activists quoted throughout this chapter have gone at length to articulate, celebrations of Indigenous resistance to the state, of Spence's refusal to surrender to settler colonial power, of her refusal to disappear, of celebrating Indigenous identity, Indigenous nations and celebrations of Spence's life, of Indigenous life. Moving together, they came together in "imagining what might be, could be, should be" (Pollock 2) a decolonised Canada.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **“We See Them. We Hear Them. And We Believe Them”: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Dramaturgy of Acknowledgement**

Since the 1970s, over 40 truth commissions have been established worldwide (Hayner 2001). On 1 June 2008, 10 days before Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered his apology on behalf of the state of Canada for the IRS system in the House of Commons, Canada joined this international landscape by adopting a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.<sup>112</sup>

Endowed with a 60 million dollar budget to carry out its five-year mandate, the TRC was tasked with a number of responsibilities.<sup>113</sup> They included providing a platform for individuals affected by the IRS system, survivors, intergenerational survivors, and those who administrated the schools to give their testimony (although providing statements was open to anyone), as well as the creation of an official record of this federal colonial policy and its ongoing legacies. Specifically, its mandate called for the TRC:

- To acknowledge the experiences of IRS survivors.
- To provide a safe and culturally appropriate setting for survivors, their families, and others who participate in the hearings.
- To promote and facilitate truth and reconciliation events both at national and community levels.
- To promote awareness and public education on the IRS system.
- To create a historical record of the IRS system by collecting relevant archival documents and gathering public and private statements.

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<sup>112</sup> Although not a TRC, there was the Inuit-led and funded Qikiqtani Truth Commission (2007 to 2010), which investigated a mass dog slaughter, executed by local officers of the RCMP in Nunavut and Northern Quebec from 1950 to 1975; see [www.qtcommission.ca](http://www.qtcommission.ca); accessed 12 June 2016. This is separate from Canada's TRC, which created an Inuit Sub-Commission (2010 to 2013) in response to the lobbying of Inuit leaders. It is beyond the reaches of this study, however, to analyse this latter body; see Gadoua (2010). It is worth mentioning here that since the initiation of Canada's TRC, another Indigenous-led commission has convened in North America. The Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare TRC (2013 to 2015) documented the experiences of Wabanaki children in the state of Maine, who starting in the 1950s, were forcefully removed from their communities and put into non-Indigenous foster care and adoption programmes; see [www.mainewabanakitrc.org](http://www.mainewabanakitrc.org); accessed 12 June 2016.

<sup>113</sup> The original mandate was set to end in 2013. In 2014, a one-year extension was granted by Aboriginal Affairs.

Following the completion of the mandate, these are to be safely preserved and made accessible at a newly established National Research Centre.<sup>114</sup>

- To produce a report and recommendations.
- To support commemoration. (TRC, “Schedule”)

The TRC traversed Canada between 2010 and 2014, holding seven national events (in Winnipeg, Inuvik, Halifax, Saskatoon, Montreal, Vancouver, and Edmonton), two regional gatherings (in Victoria and Whitehorse), and 238 local hearings in 77 communities across the country (TRC, *Honouring* 25). Closing events were held between 31 May and 3 June 2015 in Ottawa, where it released its summary report and “94 Calls to Action”, and on 15 December 2015, when the Commission published its nearly 4000-page six-volume *Final Report*.<sup>115</sup>

This chapter situates Canada’s TRC in relation to the South African TRC as a “national theatrical event” (Hutchison 26). This notion that “the commission *was* a performance” (Cole xvi; italics in original), as has been argued in regards to the South African TRC (1995-2002), is informed by the larger structure of the Commission’s production. It toured the country with a script (its mandate), it had a large cast (the Commissioners, those who provided testimonies, and a running crew of staff and volunteers), and a range of audiences (the live audiences in the local venues, online audiences who watched the live-streamed proceedings, and national and international audiences who followed the media’s coverage).

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<sup>114</sup> The permanent archive is located in Winnipeg at the University of Manitoba. Although since November 2013, the Centre is open to the public, the archivists are still in the process of accessioning the over five million records collected by the Commission; see [www.nctr.ca](http://www.nctr.ca); accessed 18 July 2016.

<sup>115</sup> While the full *Final Report* is available in English and French, the document *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation* has been recorded, but not yet publicly released, as an oral history version in four Indigenous languages: Mi’kmaq, Ojibwa, Plains Cree, and Dené (Email exchange with Jesse Boiteau, Digital Archival Assistant at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 24 August 2016).

Offering a close and multi-layered reading of the Commission's structural configuration, my analysis explores the ways in which the TRC functioned as a performance in re-storying the official story Canada. Over a period of four years, the Commission gathered thousands of statements from residential school survivors that told "a painful story", a "story of loss", "a shameful story", "a story about Canadian colonialism", "a story of destruction carried out in the name of civilization", but also a "story [that] is a tribute to Aboriginal resilience: a determination not just to endure, but to flourish" (TRC, *They* 1-3). As these stories accrued, they would reveal, as the Commissioners concluded in 2015, Canada's story of cultural genocide (see Introduction). As well as documenting individual memories as part of its effort to create an authoritative record of this history, a history long made absent, ignored, and dismissed by settler Canadians, the TRC also created public spaces for Indigenous communities to mourn, to name their grief, "to give voice to their woundings, to memorialize their losses and to publically lament" (Carter 420).

This chapter examines how, through the staging of its production, the TRC would blur history and memory in its reconfiguration of this past as a shared national memory, one that would serve as a blueprint for a new reconciled future trajectory for 'the nation.' I explore the dynamics, effects, and implications of this imperative by investigating it through the lens of the TRC's dramaturgy. I apply the term 'dramaturgy' in the manner specified by Cathy Turner and Synne Behrndt, namely to refer both to "the composition itself" and "the *discussion* of that composition" regarding an event (4; italics in original). Turner and Behrndt maintain that a dramaturgical analysis

involves exploring a work's "production, the entire context of the performance event, and that it "requires an awareness" of it being "always in process" and "open to disruption" (Ibid.).

This methodological approach underpins Catherine Cole's (2010) study of South Africa's TRC, in which she proposes that: "To grapple with the commission's public enactment, one must analyse not just what witnesses said before the commission but how they said things and how the event itself was scripted, produced, rehearsed, stage-managed, and represented" (xv).

Reflecting upon this observation, I am drawn to a remark made by Chief Commissioner Justice<sup>116</sup> Murray Sinclair in 2013 during the national event in Vancouver: "The message we share and make to all survivors when they appear in our Sharing Panels is that we see them, we hear them, and we believe them."<sup>117</sup> As signalled in my title, I have reformulated this as the point of enquiry for this chapter: What is it that was seen, heard, and believed by the Commission? And how did this correspond on a national level, beyond the immediate spaces in which the TRC staged its events? And finally, how can an investigation into the TRC's "dramaturgical choices, which affect the focus, script and conceptualisation of the whole production" (Hutchison 29), help us understand what this process of acknowledgement does, but also what it demands from the Commission's participants and audiences, as well as from the national collective?

Before further outlining the structure of Chapter 3, it is worth offering some contextual analysis regarding some of the ways in which Canada's TRC

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<sup>116</sup> In 2016, Sinclair was appointed to the Senate.

<sup>117</sup> TRC, National Event. Video recording on file with author. 20 September 2013. Vancouver, BC. (Video recordings that are on file with the author have been privately provided by the TRC. All transcriptions are my own.)



was “marked by a particular legal, ideological and cultural context” (Schuler 216). In many ways, its mandate reflects the broad aims of other truth commissions that have preceded it, namely the task “to establish an accurate record of a country’s past, clarify uncertain events, and lift the lid of silence and denial from a contentious and painful period of history” (Hayner 20). It is worth noting, however, the unorthodox beginnings of Canada’s Commission, and the “reparations politics” (Torpey 2006) that influenced the staging of this national production. The TRC on the IRS system took place in an established democracy. Unlike similar commissions held in emerging democracies, therefore, it was not used as a mechanism to announce a change of regime, as when a state transitions from a previous “evil” and “illiberal rule” to a liberal democracy (Teitel 3).<sup>118</sup> Nor was the Commission mandated through legislation or decree: it was the first truth commission in the world to have been established as a result of a judicially supervised and mediated agreement.<sup>119</sup>

Canada’s TRC was launched in response to an overwhelming number of separate protracted lawsuits, beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s, brought by former residential school students seeking redress from the Government of Canada and the churches that operated the institutions. These actions eventually coalesced, and in August 2005 the AFN filed a single class-

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<sup>118</sup> This is the standard measure of what a ‘transition’ entails within the theoretical and applied field of transitional justice. For a discussion of how in settler states theories of transitional justice have expanded this standard category, see Stanton (2010); Winter (2014). In the specific context of Canada, Matt James (2010) argues that the circumstances of its TRC, taking place when the regime that committed human rights crimes remains in power, is not as novel as some have suggested.

<sup>119</sup> Some scholars have stated, incorrectly, that it was the first such process to take place both in an established democracy and in a G8 nation (see Henderson and Wakeham, “Introduction” 3). In the United States, the Greensboro TRC convened in 2004 to investigate the events of the 1979 ‘Greensboro Massacre’ in North Carolina; five people were murdered and 10 others were wounded by members of the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party.

action lawsuit on behalf of the survivors and their families.<sup>120</sup> The largest case in Canadian history, it resulted in a 1.9 billion dollar Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA). Negotiated between the federal government, the churches of four Christian denominations,<sup>121</sup> the AFN, Inuit representatives, and the legal counsel of thousands of Indigenous claimants, the Agreement was approved by all parties in 2006 and was implemented in 2007.

The Government of Canada was compelled to sign the Settlement so as to end a wave of costly litigation, which was also driving several churches close to bankruptcy. For many survivors whose “stories were not believed” (Nagy, “Truth” 205) however, it had been a traumatic process. Recognising this, the Settlement included a call for a national truth-telling commission, reflecting the demands of survivors, who during the negotiations “force[d] Canada to hold a truth commission on the residential schools” (James, “Carnival” 18).<sup>122</sup> In short, the TRC was established as a product of a legal settlement and “was not created out of a wave of concern by Canadians for IRS survivors” (Stanton 220).

The IRSSA negotiations occurred at a time when survivors, activists, and Indigenous politicians placed increasing pressure on the federal government to offer a state apology for the residential school system. The

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<sup>120</sup> As Kathleen Daly documents, by May 2005, “there were 13,500 individual claims and an additional 11 class actions” (41).

<sup>121</sup> Anglican, Presbyterian, United, and Roman Catholic entities.

<sup>122</sup> For a detailed examination of the Settlement negotiations that led to the establishment of the TRC, see Nagy (2014). She outlines that the talks began with calls for a more legal approach that would be a public inquiry following the recommendation put forward in 1996 by the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (discussed later), a position that was advanced by the AFN versus a “more grassroots and community focused” mechanism that was advocated by the TRC Roundtable, comprised of Indigenous survivors and Protestant organisations (“Truth” 200). The end result, Nagy suggests, was a hybrid model in which these two proposals existed in a state of tension.

government responded in 2007 by “first refusing and then stalling before finally delivering it” (Alia 107). According to the then Minister of Indian Affairs, Jim Prentice, an apology would not be offered because it was not part of the agreed upon provisions of the IRSSA. He also stated that it was not needed:

Many things happened that we need to close the door on as part of Canadian history, but fundamentally, the underlying objective had been to try and provide an education to aboriginal children. (qtd. in Curry, “No”)

As discussed in the Introduction, this argument that the IRS system was a policy of ‘good intentions,’ to educate, not assimilate, Indigenous children would re-emerge in Harper’s 2008 apology. As this chapter will explore, it was a narrative that the TRC laboured to re-story.

As Courtney Jung explains, the federal government’s position was that in the event that an apology was to be given, it should come only after the TRC had concluded its mandate, “after the evidence was in” (377). It was only after the House of Commons delivered its own apology in 2007 that the government conducted an about-face, convinced by Members of Parliament that an “apology would help build trust and secure support for the First Nations initiatives the Conservatives hoped to advance” (Ibid.).

Also crucial to the politics informing the delivery of the 2008 apology was the wording of the statement. Indigenous politicians and residential school survivors had voiced a desire that they be allowed to participate in the drafting process, requesting that a draft of the document be circulated before it was to be delivered in the House of Commons. That neither of these requests were

granted, was indicative of the level of control sought by the Conservative Party in its determination to narrate its own version of the IRS system, and to impose its own form of ‘closure’ by presenting the IRS system as “a sad chapter” (Government of Canada, “House”). As Valerie Alia observes, during the apology itself the Prime Minister would thank and give credit to New Democratic Party Leader Jack Layton for pressing the federal government to issue an apology, whilst Tina Keeper (Cree), then Member of Parliament for Churchill, Manitoba, who for many years was at the forefront of efforts to pressure the government for an apology, went unacknowledged during the official proceedings.

That the Commission was a survivor initiative, that the mandate and its funding stemmed from the IRSSA, and that the TRC remained accountable to the survivors of residential schools, was something that the Commissioners regularly reiterated as it toured the country. As Commissioner Marie Wilson explained in Vancouver: “We are here as a result of courage, the courage of survivors, who as little children were in residential schools, but as adults found their voice to say [that] what happened to us as little children was not right.”<sup>123</sup> This would be reiterated whenever speakers, delivering their public testimonies to the TRC, would sometimes mistake the Commissioners for representatives of the federal government.

The confusion was perplexing, given that throughout the TRC’s mandate the Commission not only remained at arm’s length from the Government of Canada, but on two separate occasions successfully took the Government of Canada to court. This it did because of the repeated refusal of

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<sup>123</sup> TRC, National Event. Video recording on file with author. 19 September 2013. Vancouver, BC.

federal and provincial governments, as well as churches, to submit all relevant documentation to the TRC, an obligation stipulated under the terms of the IRSSA. Unsurprisingly, the difficulties faced by the TRC in accessing the documentation it required in order to fulfil its mandate called into question Canada's willingness to participate in good faith.

Wilson's Vancouver statement illustrates another significant facet of Canada's TRC, that while other transitional justice mechanisms such as the Sierra Leone TRC (2002 to 2004), the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor (2002 to 2005), and the Liberian TRC (2006 to 2009), have documented cases of children being subjected to abuse during conflict, Canada's Commission was the first to have exclusively focused its investigations on the systematic and historical mistreatment of children.<sup>124</sup>

Another key detail about the TRC is that it did not function as a "public inquiry" nor "a formal legal process" (TRC, "Schedule"). Because it lacked judicial powers, notwithstanding the clause in the IRSSA regarding access to archival documents, the Commission did not engage in an "accountability-promoting examination" of the IRS system (James, "Carnival" 1). Without the authority to incarcerate or punish the agents, the institutions, or offenders who committed abuse of children at the institutions, the TRC also

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<sup>124</sup> Though not a truth and reconciliation commission, it is important to mention the *Bringing Them Home* report tabled in Australian Federal Parliament in 1997 by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. This was an investigation into the forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children from their families starting in the mid-1800s until the 1970s (known as the Stolen Generations). In February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered an official apology. For how the discourse of reconciliation has played out in Australia, and how the federal government has failed to follow through on the report's recommendations, see Edmonds (2016); Million (2013); Short (2008). Months after Rudd's apology, Canada followed suit and offered a state apology for the IRS system in June 2008. In 2009, in the US, President Barack Obama signed the Native American Apology Resolution, "for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States" (qtd. in Edmonds 57). Unlike the former apologies, the statement given by Obama was not delivered publicly, but passed through a defense spending bill.

had no “mechanism to compel attendance or participation in any of its events or activities” (Niezen 4). Those who gave testimony were prohibited from naming accused aggressors (more commonly the caretakers of the schools, but also former students<sup>125</sup>), unless the individual concerned had granted his or her consent, or the individual had been convicted of wrongdoing as the result of a judicial process. Anthropologist Ronald Niezen writes that “Canada’s TRC is the only truth commission to have so thoroughly extinguished the identities of possible perpetrators from its proceedings”; going so far as “preventing their names from even entering the record through survivor narratives, and maintaining their invisibility and anonymity all the way through the Commission’s activities” (3). I will consider the significance of this issue throughout this chapter.

Bearing all these points in mind, Chapter 3 unfolds over two main sections. Part I begins by examining the political and social circumstances that led to the initiation of Canada’s TRC. I focus on the 1990s, when allegations of abuse committed in the residential schools began to mount, and consider how the history of the IRS was publicly configured during this period. This section also discusses the wider political environment that would shape the future performance of the Commission.

Part II turns to the staging of the TRC itself, specifically the national gatherings. I incorporate my own experiences whilst attending three of these events: in Saskatoon (June 2012), Montreal (April 2013), and Vancouver

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<sup>125</sup> Residential schools created an environment that left children vulnerable and unprotected, factors that led to student-to-student abuse becoming a prevalent occurrence within the institutions; see AHF (2014).

(September 2013),<sup>126</sup> introducing the casting and audiences of the TRC and considering “the relationship between production and reception, positioned within and against cultural values” (Bennett 86), in the context of my reading of the Commission as a theatrical event. I then turn to the Commission’s mandate, and discuss how its harnessing of a therapeutic language situates reconciliation as being intrinsically tied to a metaphor of healing; a paradigm, I contend, that anchored the TRC’s politics of acknowledgement. If, as transitional justice theorist Joanna Quinn argues, the process of acknowledgement is not only one “of coming to terms with the past” but also about “dealing with emotional response” (197), we must also consider how emotions shaped the TRC’s therapeutic model in the production of the TRC as what scholar Michael Jackson describes as a ‘storytelling event,’ in which stories are “*lived through* as a physical, sensual, and vital interaction between the body of the storyteller and the bodies of the listeners, in which people reach out toward one another, sitting closely together, singing in unison, laughing or crying as one” (46; emphasis in original).

After highlighting some of the major themes that emerged from the testimonies that I witnessed,<sup>127</sup> my analysis describes how the Commission encouraged the idea that reconciliation is experienced as an “emotional repertoire” (Hurley 2010; 2011). This I investigate through an assessment of two symbolic practices: the Bentwood Box and the gathering of ‘Tear

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<sup>126</sup> For passages that are taken from my fieldwork notes, I will give an embedded citation as follows: [TRC National Event, Location, Date].

<sup>127</sup> Both those providing testimony and the audiences physically present in the venues were constantly reminded by the Commissioners, emcees, and through large banners and distributed leaflets, of the public nature of the TRC. For example, one such leaflet announces “THIS IS A TRC PUBLIC EVENT” and is followed by several bullet points that explain that names and what is spoken “is not confidential”, and that participating in the event “*is voluntary*” (TRC, “Sharing Circle”; italics and caps in original). Because those participating in the public forums consented to having their identities known and therefore asserted a desire to become part of the official record on the IRS legacy, I have included names in my analysis.

Tissues.’ Building upon the recent work of scholars who have interrogated the affective politics of Canada’s TRC, I explore how the Commission not only engendered the idea of reconciliation as entailing the habituation of positive emotions, but also necessitated the purging of negative ones. With the former endorsed as contributing to individual and societal healing, and the latter as a transgression and impediment to the repairing of Indigenous and settler relations, I ask the following: What does this dramaturgy tell us about the desire to control unwieldy emotions that might call the possibility of truth and reconciliation into question? And how was this dramaturgical choice of the TRC negotiated, re-negotiated, or agitated during the national events?

## **Part I: Before the TRC**

A confluence of events in Canada through the 1990s led to thousands of former residential school students demanding redress from churches and the federal government. Although allegations of sexual assault had surfaced earlier, it was not until the exposure in 1989 of the widespread sexual exploitation of non-Indigenous children at the Roman Catholic-run Mount Cashel Orphanage in Newfoundland that there was a major turning point in national awareness about the IRS system.<sup>128</sup> In the wake of the orphanage scandal, Phil Fontaine, then the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and today a prominent Indigenous leader, disclosed on the CBC news broadcast *The Journal* on 30 October 1990 that he and his classmates had been

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<sup>128</sup> The first public allegations of sexual assault emerged in 1988, when eight former students of St. George’s Residential School in Lytton, BC took the government and churches to court to sue for damages. The Anglican Church and the federal Crown admitted liability and agreed to a settlement. Derek Clarke, a former dormitory supervisor at the institution, was convicted and sentenced to 12 years in prison for abusing the plaintiff, Floyd Mowatt, from 1970 to 1973.



abused at Fort Alexander residential school in Manitoba.<sup>129</sup> With this televised interview in the headlines, and whilst widespread media coverage of the orphanage scandal continued to unfold,<sup>130</sup> Fontaine followed his CBC interview with a series of television and radio appearances. Fontaine appealed repeatedly to the authorities investigating the sexual improprieties committed by clergy at Mount Cashel to broaden their remit to include residential schools. The then Minister of Indian Affairs, Tom Siddon, responded in 1992 by stating that an inquiry was not necessary (Miller, *Shingwauk's* 328-329; Stanton 51-52; Woods, "Anglican" 74-75), part of a "long tradition" of the Government of Canada's intransigence regarding the grievances and demands of Indigenous communities (Miller, *Shingwauk's* 328),

Fontaine's revelation was a watershed moment in "dramatically dispelling a 'code of silence' that had long surrounded the issue of sexual abuse in the residential schools among former students" (Woods, "Anglican" 75). Increasingly, survivors came forward with their experiences and began filing claims in the civil courts against specific individuals, and the police responded with investigations. A Native Residential School Task Force was formed in 1993 by the RCMP to probe allegations of abuse committed at residential schools between 1890 and 1984. By 2000, however, only five people had been charged despite 3,400 complaints registered against 170 individuals identified by the Force as suspects (Regan, *Unsettling* 8). The reasons were twofold. First, as Paulette Regan documents, "[i]n many

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<sup>129</sup> The interview is available here, <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/phil-fontaines-shocking-testimony-of-sexual-abuse>; accessed 20 August 2016.

<sup>130</sup> This included nationally televised proceedings from a Royal Commission of Inquiry and the release of its final report in 1991, a docudrama by the National Film Board of Canada entitled *The Boys of St Vincent* (1992), and hundreds of articles published in local and national newspapers and magazines (Woods, "Anglican" 74-75).

instances, laying charges was no longer possible because alleged perpetrators had died” (Ibid. 9). Second, as the TRC’s *Final Report* explains, “[i]n some cases, the federal government actually compromised these investigations [...] to defend its own position in civil cases brought against it by residential school Survivors” (*Honouring* 212).

One of the most-high profile cases to have emerged from this period, illustrating how IRS history was being shaped in the public sphere, was the RCMP’s investigation into the activities of Arthur Henry Plint, a dormitory supervisor at Alberni Indian Residential School in BC. In 1995, the British Columbia Supreme Court gave 77-year old Plint an 11-year prison term for sexually assaulting 28 Indigenous boys between ages of six and 13 from 1948 to 1968. At the ruling, Justice Douglas Hogarth famously labelled Plint a “sexual terrorist”, and stating further that “as far as the victims were concerned, the Indian [R]esidential [S]chool system was nothing more than institutionalized pedophilia” (qtd. in Niezen 36). According to Niezen, the court’s sentencing made any “public position of doubt or qualification concerning the harm resulting from residential school [...] untenable” (Ibid.).

After Fontaine’s 1990 disclosure, the subject of abuse committed in residential schools was kept in the public eye through the work of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). Convened by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in 1991, the Commission was established in response to two events of Indigenous unrest. The first was the failure of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990, constitutional negotiations that had accommodated the ‘two founding nations’ of Canada (English and French), but which were blocked by Ojibwa-Cree Manitoba MP Elijah Harper. The second incident took place one

month after the fallout of the Accord, during the summer-long armed stand-off led by Mohawk protestors in Oka. Given a broad 16-point mandate to investigate the troubled relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state - of which the protests at Oka, and the resultant outpouring of anti-Indigenous sentiment towards the resistance, had become a recent flashpoint - the RCAP asked the following: “*What are the foundations of a fair and honourable relationship between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of Canada?*” (RCAP, *Highlights*; italics in original)

The Commissioners (four Indigenous and three non-Indigenous) reviewed hundreds of years of Canadian history, the conditions of health in Indigenous communities, land claims, the status of languages, and the justice system, among other issues, in order better to understand the present day situation, making the RCAP “the most extensive inquiry into [I]ndigenous relations ever conducted on a partnership basis in a settler society” (Russell qtd. in Stanton 49). Over the course of five years, its seven-member commission visited 96 communities, consulted various experts, and organised 178 days of public hearings across Canada, eventually reaching a simple conclusion: “*The main policy direction, pursued for more than 150 years, first by colonial then by Canadian governments, has been wrong*” (RCAP, *Highlights*; italics in original).

Many of the individuals who came forward to offer their testimonies to the Commissioners were former residential school students, and in response the RCAP included a section on the IRS system in its *Final Report* (1996, Vol. 1, Part II, Chapter 10). But as anthropologist James Waldram notes, “many [survivors] still had difficulty talking openly in any great detail about their

own painful experiences” and that “relatively few embraced the opportunity” (233). The Commissioners were able to conclude, however, that the residential schools were premised on the assimilation of Indigenous children, that this “resocialization, of the great transformation from ‘savage’ to ‘civilized’” was inherently violent, and that it was a policy that “aimed at severing the artery of culture that ran between generations” and “the profound connection between parent and child sustaining family and community” (qtd. in Niezen 34).

These conclusions were hugely significant because before the RCAP, the IRS system was primarily framed in the public sphere in terms of isolated incidents of abuse and neglect. As practitioner and performance scholar Jill Carter (Anishinaabe/Ashkenazi) makes clear, the ‘isolated incident’ optic sanitises and removes the much larger colonial context of this federal policy, displacing “the culpability of the state and its agents in a campaign of cultural genocide” (416). Carter turns to the earlier-discussed CBC interview from 1990 between journalist Barbara Frum and Phil Fontaine, suggesting that the aim of Fontaine’s interlocutor, “despite the sympathy displayed”, seems to be “to deflect the focus of Fontaine’s revelations away from the Church-run and state-sanctioned atrocities to which he was testifying and toward a personal confession that would both shock and titillate the viewing public” (Ibid.). Throughout the segment, which lasted less than ten minutes, Frum asks Fontaine, both implicitly and explicitly, to describe in detail the forms of sexual abuse he experienced at Fort Alexander, a line of questioning with which she persists even after Fontaine emphatically states that it “is very much a private matter” (*CBC Digital Archives*, “Phil”). Carter observes that “Fontaine did not ‘perform’ in accordance with [the] expectations” of Frum,

namely that he “might ‘break’ under her questioning and confess to violent or unseemly acts”, which would present both Fontaine and other IRS survivors as an “irrevocably broken subset of individuals” (416). Carter’s reading of the interview, as voyeuristically attending to trauma by Frum and then put on view for a national public to consume his trauma, illustrates how the rise of abuse allegations in the 1990s was received by the national collective. As scholars, such as Carter and Thielen-Wilson emphasise, it was a response that denied the IRS system as a policy of violent assimilation.

This framing is also visible in the aforementioned 1995 sentencing of Arthur Plint and his description as a “sexual terrorist” (qtd. in Niezen 36). Thielen-Wilson observes that this judgement, couched in individual terms, “masks the violence *of the system* (specifically the white terror of the colonial policy of assimilation) created and upheld by 122 successive governments (and citizens) of Canada and its legal system” (121-122; italics in original).<sup>131</sup> It is this settler-oriented understanding of IRS history that the RCAP, and its successor, the TRC, would seek to dismantle.

One of the recommendations proposed by the RCAP was that “a full investigation into Canada’s residential school system, in the form of a public inquiry be established”, in order to “bring to light and begin to heal the grievous harms suffered by countless Aboriginal children, families and communities” (qtd. in Emberley 42). The Liberal government of Jean Chrétien, however, as well as subsequent prime ministers, rejected the request for an inquiry and “ignored, or deferred” many of the other over 400 recommendations published in the RCAP’s five-volume *Final Report* (Million

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<sup>131</sup> See Thielen-Wilson’s (2012) study for an in-depth analysis regarding how the Canadian court system upholds settler colonialism in IRS case law.

5). Presenting the first official call for national reconciliation to “repair the damage to the relationship” through the creation of “a new footing of mutual recognition and respect, sharing and responsibility” (*Highlights*), the Report was, according to a former federal deputy of Indian and Northern Affairs, “[d]ead on arrival” (Swain 169). This straightforward repudiation of the RCAP’s findings suggests the level of denial regarding the state’s commitment to account both for Canada’s colonial past and its colonial present.

The Government of Canada did respond to the RCAP, however, with a 1998 document entitled *Gathering Strength: Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan*, which included a promise for a 350 million dollar grant for the AHF,<sup>132</sup> a pledge to introduce alternative justice mechanisms,<sup>133</sup> and a Statement of Reconciliation. The Statement expressed regret, but acknowledged only the physical and sexual abuses that occurred in the institutions, while failing to apologise for the policy itself (see Introduction). Nevertheless, the Statement further opened the way for public discourse about sexual abuse in the schools, which in turn contributed to a rising tide of lawsuits issued by residential school survivors. As described at the start of the chapter, these cases culminated with the multibillion dollar agreement - in principle - that was the

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<sup>132</sup> An Indigenous-led organisation, it was established in 1998 “to encourage and support, through research and funding contributions, community-based Aboriginal directed healing initiatives which address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse suffered in Canada’s Indian Residential School System” (AHF, “FAQs”). The Foundation received extra funding under the IRSSA, but it was forced to close in 2014 due to a withdrawal of financial support from the Harper government. This decision received mass criticism, as hundreds of the AHF’s projects were gone overnight; occurring at a time when the TRC was conducting its public work, and when a number of reserves were experiencing renewed crises. As Robyn Green notes, the closing of AHF alone illuminates on the limits of the Government of Canada’s ostensible commitment to reconciliation (146).

<sup>133</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the controversial out-of-court Alternative Dispute Resolution Program. Set-up in 2002 by the federal government, it was created as an alternative to litigation, but ultimately failed to respond to the multifaceted needs of the survivors; see Regan (2010).

## Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (2006). The Settlement

includes five separate components:

- The Common Experience Payment (CEP).<sup>134</sup> This was an automatic nominal symbolic payment<sup>135</sup> of 10 thousand dollars and an additional three thousand dollars for each subsequent year a former student attended a residential school from the Settlement's formally agreed upon list of 139 residential schools and residences (64 Roman Catholic, 35 Anglican, 14 United Church-run institutions, and others with no denomination); this is a total number, not the number of schools that were simultaneously in operation.
- The Independent Assessment Process (IAP). This was an adjudicative process that featured lawyers, but without cross-examination. It was set-up to 'resolve' claims of physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional abuse, with compensation distributed on a point-system model of assessment ranked accordingly to the degree of harm.<sup>136</sup>
- Health, healing, and cultural support initiatives.
- A commemoration fund for national and community projects.
- The establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

It is important to note here that survivors of the Métis Nation, the Nunatsiavut Inuit, and the Innu Nation were excluded from the IRSSA entirely. The reasons for certain schools not being included are varied. Either they were not funded by Ottawa, and therefore, according to the federal government, not officially part of the IRS system (this included institutions that were run independently, or in partnership between religious orders or provincial governments); because the schools closed in the early twentieth

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<sup>134</sup> Individual experiences with the CEP varied widely. As Niezen observes, "many recipients turned their temporary financial gain into opportunities with lasting effects, helping out family members, clearing up debts, and investing for the future" (44). But social services programs have noted that the sudden increase in money also resulted in alcohol and drug abuse in some families (Ibid. 44-45).

<sup>135</sup> This payment did not reach many survivors. At the time of the Agreement they were dying at a rate of five per day (Reimer et al. 5).

<sup>136</sup> The IAP has been extremely controversial (see Niezen 45-49). A number of lawyers have been accused of misconduct and have been disbarred for scamming survivors. Survivors would sometimes speak of their experiences with the IAP as part of their testimony to the TRC. Many described the process as insulting and re-traumatizing. In Vancouver, survivor Jillian Harris recounted that her lawyer told her that she needed to "tell a better story" because she had been "only raped once" (TRC, National Event. Video recording on file with author. 19 September 2013. Vancouver, BC.).

century; or because individuals attended as day students and therefore did not live at the institutions (TRC, *They* 1).<sup>137</sup> Even though these exclusions were ratified by all parties of the Settlement, they remain problematic and highly contested, as the official criteria suggested that there was a limit to who was, and who was not, eligible for financial compensation and health support (Green 142).

Equally important was that these parameters also demarcated who was and who was not to receive public acknowledgement for their experiences of the IRS system, undermining the efforts of the TRC to facilitate healing and reconciliation for all survivors - although those excluded from the Settlement were still able to offer statements and participate in the activities of the TRC (Ibid.).<sup>138</sup> This use of the IRSSA as a way to “draw a line through history” (Jung 376) was exemplified in Stephen Harper’s 2008 apology. Attempting to establish irrefutable facts about the IRS federal policy, the Prime Minister resolutely states that: “One hundred and thirty-two federally-supported schools were located in every province and territory, except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island” (Government of Canada, “House”). Harper is eluding here to the Settlement’s formal list of institutions. Although the Settlement originally identified 130 schools and residences, since 2006

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<sup>137</sup> The IRS Survivor’s Society explains that a day school was “a school located on or near Native Reserves in Canada”, which “operated for the purposes of educat[ing] registered Indian, Métis, and Inuit children” (“Day School”). In addition to day schools, there were a variety of other institutions that operated within the over-century long implementation of the IRS system. Including: hostels, student residences, industrial schools, billets, and residential schools; some of these were administered in combination thereof.

<sup>138</sup> The TRC’s *Final Report* offers two separate volumes documenting the experiences of Inuit and Métis communities; respectively entitled *The Inuit and Northern Experience* (Vol. 2) and *The Métis Experience* (Vol. 3). Although Métis individuals participated in the national events, they were not invited to the closing ceremonies of the TRC, which led the Métis National Council to release a press statement describing the decision as “inexcusable and demoralizing” (*CBC News*, “Métis”). But there were other ways in which the Commission reinforced lines of Métis exclusion during the events. For example, there was no Michif translation services offered at any of the gatherings I attended.



several others have been added, bringing the number to 139 institutions officially recognised by the Government of Canada.<sup>139</sup>

The IRSSA list was met with anger by excluded survivors. In many cases, these schools were “administered by the same clergy and agencies,” and many of these former students experienced the same forms of abusive treatment, the same loss of Indigenous culture and uprooting from their families, as those institutions recognised by the IRSSA (Logan 83). Although the federal government views it differently, according to Rhonda Claes and Deborah Clifton in their report for the Law Commission of Canada (1998), “[r]egardless of name changes [...] the institutions remained “total institutions” from which a policy of assimilation was aggressively practiced (18).

Following the Agreement, some survivors petitioned for over 1,484 additional institutions to be recognised. The bulk of these applications were rejected by the courts, but not all (Niezen 72; TRC, *They* 1). A recent example is from 2016, when more than 800 former students of day schools in Newfoundland and Labrador won a 50 million dollar compensation package from the federal government after a decade-long court battle.<sup>140</sup> According to one claimant, Danny Pottle, with financial reparations finally conceded, his group of survivors are now waiting for an apology from the Government of Canada so that national acknowledgement of the day school experience can become part of the official story of the IRS system (Bailey).

This section has sought to highlight how awareness of the abuses committed at the residential schools increasingly entered the public sphere around the 1990s. I also discussed some of the ways in which the settler public

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<sup>139</sup> For a map of where the officially recognised schools were located, see <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015606/1100100015611>; 20 October 2016.

<sup>140</sup> This financial package is part of a separate legal process to that of the IRSSA.

and federal governments have consistently attempted “to fabricate a sharp divide between Canada’s unscrupulous ‘past’ and the unfortunate ‘legacy’ of this past” (Coulthard 121) by disassociating the IRS policy from its assimilative intent. As first argued, in the Introduction, through my analysis of Harper’s 2008 apology, this approach renders explicit the state’s ongoing drive to settle an unsettled history, encapsulating Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s observation that “[t]he past - or, more accurately, pastness - is a position” (*Silencing* 15). This position must be taken into account in any discussion regarding how discourses of truth and reconciliation are constituted, disseminated, and leveraged in Canada by various stakeholders. Settlement was additionally important because one of its major outcomes was the establishment of the TRC, to which I now turn.

## **Part II: Staging the TRC**

Like “any theatrical event”, writes Yvette Hutchison, “arguably the two central constituents are the performers and the audience” (29). I begin Part II by introducing the protagonists of the TRC (the commissioners) and the audiences of this national production.

The first few months of the convening of the TRC were beset with internal politics. The original panel was dissolved following the resignation of Justice Harry Laforme (a member of the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation), who stepped down in September 2008, less than six months after his appointment as Chairperson, citing concerns about the Commission’s structure and objectives. Laforme felt that the chair should be entitled to shape the commission’s goals and course. But the co-commissioners, British Columbia

lawyer Jane Morley and Claudette Dumont-Smith (Anishwabe Kwe), who had a long career in Aboriginal health, maintained that the work should be run according to majority rule.

Laforme also cited a lack of autonomy from the federal government, stating that “[u]nfortunately, it is money and other issues that are putting the crucial independence of the commission at risk” (qtd. in Diebel). On the issue of objectives, he felt that there was an “incurable problem” over how to approach the mandate (qtd. in Stanton 92). Laforme wanted the TRC to focus on reconciliation, while the other Commissioners wanted to focus on truth-telling (Ibid.). Three months later, the other Commissioners also stepped down. After several months of delay, and the cancellation of the first national event in Vancouver in 2009, the second panel was announced by a selection committee that July. Manitoba’s first Indigenous judge, Honorable Justice Murray Sinclair (Anishinaabe) was appointed chairperson. Marie Wilson (non-Indigenous), a former journalist for the *CBC* and Regional Director for Northern Quebec and the Northern Territories, was brought on board; so too was Chief Wilton Littlechild (Cree), a lawyer and Alberta regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations. Littlechild is a residential school survivor, while Justice Sinclair and Wilson have family members who attended the institutions. Months behind schedule, the first national TRC event was held in Winnipeg in 2010.<sup>141</sup>

In an attempt to draw national attention to the IRS system, the Commission followed in the footsteps of South Africa’s TRC by opening many of its forums to the public and to the media. One tool used by the

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<sup>141</sup> Canada’s TRC’s rough start is not uncommon. For example, Ghana, South Africa, and Nepal also faced many obstacles before the commissions commenced their mandate, indicating the complexities and tensions inherent in such an undertaking (Stanton 93n419).

Canadian TRC that was not at the disposal of the South African TRC, however, was the internet. The Canadian Commission live-streamed a number of its proceedings on an online platform, widening the TRC's prospective audiences and impact.<sup>142</sup> The Commission's *Final Report* "estimates there were as many as 155,000 visits to the seven National Events; over 9,000 residential school Survivors registered to attend them (while many others attended but did not register)" (*Honouring* 25); while others witnessed the gatherings via live-streaming, "[t]here were over 93,350 views of its webcast during the National Events from at least sixty-two different countries" (Ibid. 31).

When assessing these numbers, one should first draw attention to three major challenges presented to the TRC from the outset which, I contend, not only help to explain the low number of people physically present at the hearings, but which also impacted upon its larger socio-political efficacy.<sup>143</sup> Ric Knowles' *Reading the Materialist Theatre* (2004) is particularly instructive when making this argument, insofar as he provides a "materialist semiotic" approach to analyse the production of meaning in theatre, which he views as operating as "a negotiation at the intersection of three shifting and mutually constitutive poles" (3). These are: performance text ("script, *mise en scène*, design, actors' bodies, movement and gestures, etc. as reconstituted in discourse"); conditions of production (this includes, "training and traditions, rehearsal process, working conditions, stage and backstage architecture and

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<sup>142</sup> See [www.livestream.com/trc\\_cvr/folder](http://www.livestream.com/trc_cvr/folder); accessed 12 August 2016.

<sup>143</sup> I say this in the context of the general population of Canada, which is over 35 million people. In 2010, the AHF documented that 86,000 residential school survivors were still living (Reimer et. al 2n2), and that "approximately 287,350 Aboriginal people have experienced intergenerational impacts, which means there may be close to 373,350 individuals whose lives have been intimately touched by the residential school system" (Ibid. 2).

amenities, historical/cultural moment of production, etc.”); and finally, conditions of reception (“publicity/review discourse, front-of-house, auditorium, and audience amenities, neighbourhood, transportation, ticket prices, historical/cultural moment of reception”) (19).

This theoretical framework is exhaustive and covers vast ground in offering performance scholars tools to investigate “[m]eaning’ in a given performance situation - the social and cultural work done by the performance, its performativity, and its force” (Ibid.). In outlining some of the obstacles that the TRC faced, I shall flesh out two specific elements from Knowles’ “triangular formulation” (18-19), the working conditions of the Commission, and its publicity discourse.

Despite its enormous mandate, the TRC was only given a small budget from the IRSSA, placing limitations on the possible scope of the Commission’s work, its human resources, and potential outreach. This was raised by Eugene Arcand (Cree), a member of the TRC’s Survivor Committee, an advisory body to the Commission, who told the audience during the national event in Vancouver: “You think that 60 million dollars over a five-year mandate to do the work that has been required, in the work that continues to be required, is enough? Common sense tells me that can’t happen” [TRC, National Event, Vancouver, 19 September 2013].

Because the Commission was negotiated behind closed doors, there was a general lack of public awareness of Canada’s TRC from the start. But perhaps more important was the widespread ignorance amongst non-Indigenous peoples about the history of the IRS system, particularly when the Commission was first established. To offer one example, after Prime Minister

Stephen Harper delivered his 2008 apology for the IRS system, an Environics benchmark survey found that only 50 per cent of “Canadians had read or heard something about the schools” (Nagy and Gillespie 5). This meant that whilst the TRC toured the country gathering statements, it had to self-promote its own activities at the same time as persuading ‘the nation’ about the “moral significance of the schools” (Niezen 146-147).

This national shortage of public knowledge of both the history of the IRS system and the TRC was mirrored and exacerbated, particularly in the early stages of its mandate, by the press’s sparse and fleeting reporting of the national events. The Commission did not become a “media event”, to use Elihu Katz’s and Daniel Dayan’s term (1992).<sup>144</sup> This was in contrast to South Africa’s TRC, where the media served “as both essential actors in the TRC drama, as well as the stage on which much of the drama [was] performed” (Krabill qtd. in Lynch 164), although Canada’s Commission received increased attention towards the end of its tenure. Speaking in 2010 about the lack of press coverage, Marie Wilson stated: “At some point we have to ask ourselves: How is it that we as a country devoted so much air time to the TRC say in South Africa but [have] dedicated so little to our own on a sustained national basis” (qtd. in Sas).

While the level of online engagement might seem encouraging at first glance, this tally includes global audiences, and therefore does not reflect what took place within Canada itself. Moreover, when the Commission ended its mandate, a 2015 Angus Reid poll revealed that only “[a]bout one-third of

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<sup>144</sup> Their work focuses on television broadcasts, but more specifically in the “festive viewing” (1) of ceremonial events with “heroic figures” (12) that “enthralled very large audiences” (13), such as the Olympic Games. See Charmaine McEachern’s study (2002), which expands Katz’s and Dayan’s typology through framing the South African TRC as a media event, which, she argues, for millions of South Africans “*became* the TRC” (30; italics in original).

Canadians said they saw some media coverage of the TRC and had the occasional conversation about it with friends or family, and 17 per cent said they were following it closely”; while “18 per cent, said they hadn’t seen anything about it, and 31 per cent said they just scanned the headlines” (Rabson, “New”).

For a TRC to stimulate national interest, writes Gabrielle Lynch in her performance analysis of Kenya’s Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (2008-2013), which like the TRC on the IRS system received limited media coverage, it must “provide ‘good theatre’ - it has to captivate, excite and stimulate” (181). But, she adds, “it also has to conduct its work in an environment where its performances are interpreted as ‘good theatre’ and as something ‘worth watching’ by a broader public” (Ibid.). The statistics quoted above suggest that Canada’s TRC was not considered as having provided ‘good theatre’ by the national collective, which remained largely indifferent to the idea of participating in, or witnessing directly or through proxy, an exercise of civic responsibility.

This lack of national engagement exemplified ongoing “settler resistance to hearing uncomfortable truths” (Regan, *Unsettling* 191) about the country’s colonial past and present, further reflected in the general demographic composition of the audiences that were physically present at the TRC’s events. In my own experience of observing the national gatherings, audiences consisted principally of survivors, intergenerational survivors, and their families; individuals already intimately familiar with the history of the

residential schools.<sup>145</sup> If, as Peter Novick proposes when considering Holocaust testimony in the US, “[p]ublic discourse doesn’t just shape private discourse, it is its catalyst; it sends out the message ‘This is something you should be talking about’” (107), the apparent lack of interest shown by so many Canadians raises questions about the efficacy both of the TRC in its ambitious aim to foster political and social reconciliation, and of its effort to produce a national memory around the residential schools.

Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a close discourse analysis, it is important to consider what stories were heard and what issues were amplified by the media in the limited coverage that the TRC did receive. As Paul Gready notes when writing about the impact of South Africa’s TRC, “[t]o speak or be spoken for is not a one-off event but a process spanning various narrations, reinterpretations, the telling and the representation and reception of the telling” (76).

Scholars, such as Christopher Colvin, have analysed how journalists, in soliciting traumatic stories and then reducing these “to the most important, shocking, and morally obvious details of harm” (“Power” 228), have contributed to a “global political economy of traumatic storytelling” (Ibid. 236). In her study of the media’s coverage of South Africa’s TRC, Fiona Ross asserts that “the complexity of testimonies and their often rich performative

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<sup>145</sup> Out of three events I attended, Vancouver had the highest level of public engagement. This had a lot to do with the pre-publicity of the gathering. Unlike in Saskatoon and Montreal, Vancouver’s Mayor and City Council took on an active role in publicly supporting the Commission; this included the Council designating Vancouver as a ‘City of Reconciliation’ and the declaration of 2013-2014 as a ‘Year of Reconciliation’; see <http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/city-of-reconciliation.aspx>; accessed 2 June 2016. In the immediate lead-up to the TRC national event, a Reconciliation Week was also hosted by the Council, which concluded with the Walk for Reconciliation (discussed in the Conclusion). In addition to, but separate to, these activities, the University of British Columbia suspended most of its classes on the first day of the national event, in an effort to encourage its students, faculty, and staff to attend the gathering; while the TRC’s Education Day was attended by over 5,000 elementary and secondary-school students.



contexts and content were often reduced and reified as stories of suffering” (329).

These analyses intersect with what took place in Canada’s TRC. A cursory glance of the national newspapers reveals that “[m]ostly what got picked up was the horror - the abuse (physical, emotional, sexual) passed on from generation to generation, the violence and the addiction and all of the unbecoming behaviours that stem from these” (Thomas 30). As Coast Salish researcher Robina Thomas (Lyackson First Nation) observes, “[n]othing was written that focuses on churches that hired paedophiles and violent human beings who then had access to more than 150,000 Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit children” (31).

Instead, what became commonplace, even formulaic, in the national press coverage of the Commission’s events was heavily de-historicised accounts of the IRS system and descriptions of Indigenous survivors who “wept uncontrollably” (see Meissner). In so doing, this reporting deflected from the question of accountability from perpetrators of abuse, as well as from those who implemented and sustained the IRS system for well over a century. It also obstructed a potential national discussion of how settlers have benefited from this federal policy in an intergenerational manner (Robinson 2014), which, as has been explicated throughout this study, enforced the continual dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands. Although the residential school system may now be officially acknowledged as causing great individual and collective harm, the media coverage of the TRC suggests an ongoing misrecognition of this history through a denial of the colonial present.

Philosopher Trudy Govier's definition of the term is helpful in the context of this chapter:

One way of trying to understand acknowledgement is to contrast it with what it is not - which is to say, with various forms of denial. There are many forms of denial, and ways of failing to acknowledge something that is wrong. We may redescribe it, seeking to prove to ourselves that it is something other than it is. We may emotionally detach ourselves from it; we may ignore it; or we may deceive ourselves about it. (72)

The reporting from the national press illuminates a politics of denial upholding settler innocence, as the survivor stories that *did* percolate into the public sphere circulated largely as a spectacle of trauma. In fixing testimony to a discourse of injury, a conflation of Indigenous identity with "notions of victimhood" (Carter 419-420) is sustained, reproducing hegemonic configurations of settler benevolence through manifestations of pity that disavow unequal power relations and ongoing injustices.<sup>146</sup>

### **The Healing Mandate**

Having described the protagonists and the configuration of the audiences, and analysed some of the TRC's conditions of production and reception, I now offer an examination of the Commission's mandate. This document served as a "storyboard" for the staging of the national events,

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<sup>146</sup> Julie Salverson (2001) has written about this with reference to theatre projects that she has facilitated in Canada. In discussing what she terms as "an aesthetics of injury" and "an erotics of injury", Salverson warns against the fetishisation and the voyeurism that takes place in performance pieces on refugees done by non-refugees, when artists manifest a "preoccupation with the experience of loss and a privileging of trauma as a mode of knowledge" (122).

identifying its casting, its themes, and basic plot outline (Hutchison 39). To begin, I quote the opening lines of the mandate:

*There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation.* (TRC, “Schedule”; italics in original)

As the preamble is the only italicised text in the entire document, suggesting emphasis, it warrants close reading. The desire to move beyond a traumatic past and towards “a brighter future” following mass state violence is a common motivation for the establishment of a truth commission. The specific intent behind the deployment of such phrases, however, is informed by its local application; as Jacques Derrida writes, “the very actions in which [a] TRC is shaped from the beginning is a linguistic intervention” (66). Truth commissions attempt to intervene in the present through their selected “language and structures, or grammar, of performance” (Lynch 162).

Throughout this chapter, I have explicated the broader scope and parameters of Canada’s mandate. I will now unpack what I regard as its central grammar governing its politics and performance (Reinelt and Rai 1), its

so-called “healing mandate” (Moon, “Reconciliation” 166).<sup>147</sup> Embedded in the mandate’s preamble, specifically its prescribing of state-sponsored reconciliation as healing individuals, communities, and ‘the nation’ (Maxwell 223), and structuring the sequence of events in the staging of the TRC, this language recalls other truth commissions around the world, especially South Africa’s TRC. My investigation will consult both Indigenous and non-Indigenous critical assessments of Canada’s mandate, as well as scholarship responding to the work of other transitional justice mechanisms, in order better to understand how this mandate served as a script to be later workshopped in the live performance of the Commission (Hutchison 39).

From the outset of its mandate, Canada’s Commission pursued the idea “that telling and hearing narratives of violence in the name of truth can promote healing for individuals and for society” (Minow, “Hope” 241). This notion that nations, like individuals, have psyches that can and must be healed was famously articulated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the appointed chairperson for South Africa’s TRC. In the official opening of the South African TRC, he declared “[w]e are meant to be a part of the process of the healing of our nation, of our people, all of us, since every South African to

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<sup>147</sup> While my analysis makes repeated reference to South Africa’s TRC, during the negotiations that led to Canada’s TRC, “people were well aware that the South African TRC ‘was not the be-all and end-all of truth commissions’” (Mahoney qtd. in Nagy, “Truth” 210). Moreover, although South Africa’s TRC features prominently in the transitional justice landscape as a “brand-name” (Ibid. 212), within the country the Commission has been widely criticised as an inadequate substitution for justice. This is because perpetrators could apply for amnesty in exchange for their testimony, because it failed to provide financial reparations, and because the TRC focused on an individualistic and legalistic framework, which meant that apartheid’s structural forms of violence were not investigated; see Mamdani (2000); Wilson (2001). It is also critical to note that “the emergence of reconciliation as a new transitional norm” did not begin, of course, with South Africa; but was in response to a host of global developments, including the events and aftermath of World War II, transitions to democracy in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe (Moon, *Narrating* 6).

some extent or other has been traumatized. We are wounded people...We all stand in need of healing” (qtd. in Wilson 14; ellipsis in original).

This placing of “health implications” as “the primary focus of national reconciliation projects” has been criticised by Michael Humphrey (“Therapeutic” 204). He contends that the healing imperative of truth commissions serves to “make violence, and therefore the question of rights, disappear from the narrative of reconciliation by focusing on the effects of violence rather than on its causes” (Ibid.). Similarly, Claire Moon observes that “[t]herapy sidesteps redress for the deep structural and economical inequalities within which gross violations of human rights become possible, because it concentrates instead on changing people’s behavior through altering their self-perception” (“Healing” 82). It is through this focus on the effects of trauma, and not on its structural origins, that truth commissions endorse “a therapeutic moral order” (Ibid. 71), or what Christopher Colvin labels as a “therapeutic metaphor”, one which positions “the victims of human rights violations [...] as potential patients whose traumatic suffering has left them in need of medicalized intervention by the state or other expert providers” (“Purity” 419). This psychotherapeutic approach, Colvin suggests, can “box” individuals “into the prescribed role of passive patient eager to be healed through testimony” (Ibid. 420).<sup>148</sup>

In giving a national platform for people who have suffered devastating abuse to share their story in the presence of others, truth commissions are consistently lauded in transitional justice literature as a mechanism that can

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<sup>148</sup> Euro-centric therapeutic models advancing the ‘talking cure’ also commonly assume that all pain is expressible and accessible through narration; see Scarry (1985). In the field of theatre and performance studies, James Thompson has warned against the dangers of universalising the idea that telling one’s story is a defining “recipe” for trauma-relief (68).

help heal wounds and restore the dignity of survivors (Minow, *Between* 173).

Heidi Grunebaum-Ralph writes that “a collective witnessing of survivors’ testimony within a collective testimonial site can consecrate a memorialisation, a ritualising validation of survivor/witness, of the testimony and, by extension, of the truth-claim which underpins that testimony” (22).

Some scholars, such as Julie McGonegal, have suggested that a focus on a “TRC’s limitations, risks presenting a reductionist view on what is in some ways an innovative attempt to recover lost narratives” (17). This leads her to ask: “Is there not an ethical imperative to acknowledge [...] the benefits [this mechanism] has afforded many victims [...]? Is it not important that we avoid overlooking the crucial pedagogic and memorial functions that truth commissions perform?” (Ibid.)

Although these are important questions to consider, advocacy of the work of truth commissions should not come at the expense of querying claims that such bodies promote, such as the relative benefit of truth-telling narrated as having a causal relationship with healing. Examining the few available empirical TRC-related studies, David Mendeloff has found that the claim that such mechanisms can heal trauma “rest[s] far more on faith than on sound logic or empirical evidence” (356); Gearoid Millar points out that this “data is often collected not from those experiencing the process but from those administering it” (482).

Discussions that focus only on the palliative and empowering attributes of giving public testimony often obscure how this confessional mechanism can be the site of re-traumatisation for victims of egregious human rights violations. As performance scholar Julie Salverson writes, “telling stories is

not always an empowering experience” (qtd. in Thompson 69; see also Ross 2003). While some may find sharing their story a therapeutic experience, any cathartic relief may be short-lived. For example, after giving a statement, “new symptoms [can arise] that may be related to an actual retraumatization caused by retelling the story” (De Ridder qtd. in Brounéus 61). In the case of post-genocide Rwanda, for instance, Karen Brounéus (2008) has documented that some women, after testifying in public during the *gacaca* tribunals (2005-2012), experienced new threats of violence from perpetrators.

An additional consideration is that if testimonies come “without response, this might result in further harm” (Llewellyn 200); both for the subject giving testimony and on a societal level, as new hostilities in relations between victims and former adversaries may arise as a result of the continued alienation of survivors. As Gillian Whitlock explains, although the infrastructure of truth commissions “can elicit testimony [...] it cannot guarantee the ethical and political conditions that secure an appropriate response: empathetic witnessing” (77); an observation that corresponds with what took place with Canada’s TRC.

Taken together, these critiques illustrate a key tension that commissions face and have to negotiate, that in pursuing a project of national healing in the hope that it will promote societal peace, this therapeutic strategy can serve to displace, or at least distract from, demands for justice and restitution made by survivors, and in so doing can obscure their political agency (Green 130).

In the context of the TRC on the IRS system, many Indigenous scholars have condemned its mandate on these very grounds. For example,

Dian Million (2013) argues that the TRC's isolated focus on the suffering caused by residential schools reaffirms narratives of Indigenous pathology, positioning the legacies of the IRS system as an Indigenous problem, not a settler problem. Million states that "[w]ith the establishment of the TRC, Aboriginal peoples seem to become the subject of a humanitarian project" (6) to be again saved and healed by the settler who extends expert help; rather than focusing on the colonial relationship. It is colonialism, not Indigenous subjects, that Million, as well as others such as Glen Coulthard (127) and Jo-Ann Episkenew (11), argues is in need of analysis, repair, and a cure.

The mandate of Canada's TRC has also been criticised not just for importing Western models of healing, but also on the grounds that this became its main constitutive framework. Robyn Green (2012) draws out the central difference between non-Indigenous and Indigenous conceptualisations of the term 'healing': whilst the former focuses on individual recovery through language, for the latter it reflects multi-faceted embodied practices of restoring interpersonal connections both to kin relationships and to the land. For Indigenous communities, the healing process is also attendant to "internalized colonization/self-hatred and ongoing abuse in their communities perpetuated by their own community members", which has come as a result "of the destruction of culture, language, and identity and the legacy of abuse from the residential schools" (Rice and Snyder 49), as well as from centuries of colonialism and its cumulative transgenerational impacts. Thus, Green concludes, we "need to trouble categories of trauma and victimhood that may engender outcomes of *cure*, which ultimately constitute a foreclosure on the past in Canada's reconciliation process" (148; italics in original).



This argument is similarly pursued by Jeff Corntassel (Cherokee Nation), Chaw-win-is (Nuu-chah-nulth) and T'lakwadzi (Kwakwaka'wakw) (2009):

[W]hile the Indian Residential School[s] Settlement Agreement and the formation of the TRC are designed to address the devastating legacies of residential schools, they run the risk of framing these questions in a narrow way that neglects to fully appreciate the ongoing impacts of residential schools on communities, families, and individuals and the lived experiences of resilience and resurgence that need to be shared with intergenerational survivors and other Indigenous peoples. (140)

Corntassel et al. also argue that the Commission's mandate fails to afford a pedagogical space for Indigenous-based methodologies of storytelling such as *haa-huu-pah*, which embraces "teaching stories or sacred living histories that solidify ancestral and contemporary connections to place" (137). They advocate Indigenous peoples turning to community-based truth-telling initiatives that serve as alternatives to the TRC, initiatives that reject the Euro-centric and Christian underpinnings of the Commission<sup>149</sup> and "restory the settler version of history" (138) which, in their view, the mandate fails to address.

Though not in the preamble, the TRC's mandate offers an ambiguous definition of 'reconciliation' later on in the document, describing the term as a discursive process framed not only as a national project, but as something that also takes place on an intimate level, including repairing familial relations:

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<sup>149</sup> As Niezen notes, truth commissions "have certain affinities" with Christianity, namely Christian concepts of forgiveness, and that "sins and transgressions" are "to be released by rituals of confession" (110). The main difference is that a truth commission "is orientated towards a public unburdening" (Ibid.).

Reconciliation is an ongoing individual and collective process, and will require commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian Residential School (IRS) students, their families, communities, religious entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada. (TRC, “Schedule”)

In a more general context, reconciliation is commonly defined as the restoration of social bonds. This “implies building or rebuilding relationships today that are not haunted by the conflicts and hatreds of yesterday” (Hayner qtd. in Schaap 10). But the etymological origin of the term ‘reconciliation’ also suggests a return to friendship. As Sto:lō scholar Dylan Robinson writes: “Its root, *conciliare*, reminds us that the term stems from ‘to make friendly’ and that at the heart of reconciliation then [...] is a concern with ‘good’ feelings of friendliness” (“Feeling” 284). Although Indigenous nations “have known and practiced reconciliation, long before the experts ever came, long before the truth commissions were ever set up” (Joseph qtd. in Nagy, “Truth” 213), for example through treaty negotiations, the idea of pursuing reconciliation on a national level in Canada through this lens of restoring friendly relations becomes a fundamentally problematic project.

Indigenous scholars have long argued that reconciliation cannot take place because Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations have always been marked and haunted by settler colonial violence (e.g. Alfred 2005; Amagoalik 2008; Chrisjohn and Wasacase 2009; Coulthard 2014; Henderson and Wakeham 2009; Kelly 2008; Martin and Robinson 2016; Million 2013; Robinson 2014; L. Simpson 2011). Roland Chrisjohn and Tanya Wasacase state this explicitly when they write that reconciliation “is an attempt to

insinuate a revised and bogus history of Indian/non-Indian relations” (222).

They note that, “[t]o put it simply, before two parties can *reconcile* they must, at some earlier time, have been *conciled*” (Ibid. 221; italics in original).

A number of Indigenous theorists have derided the TRC for calling on survivors to perform their traumatic past in the service of national reconciliation while little emphasis is placed on economic and political change on behalf of Canada. Leanne Simpson questions the TRC process, describing it as a project that “allows the state to co-opt the individual and collective pain and suffering of [Indigenous] people, while also criminalizing the inter-generational impacts of residential schools” (*Dancing* 22; see Chapter 2). Also critical of the reconciliation discourse is Taiaiake Alfred, who argues that for it to be more than mere rhetoric and a balm for white guilt, it must be accompanied by a commitment to the restoration of stolen lands and resources back to Indigenous communities, asserting that “without massive restitution, [...] reconciliation would permanently enshrine colonial injustices and is itself a further injustice” (*Wasáse* 152), and would continue as “an emasculating” and “weak-kneed” concept “that does nothing to help Indigenous peoples regain their dignity and strength” (Ibid., “Restitution” 181).

Because there was no period of a shared and actual equal partnership, these scholars maintain that the imperative to reconcile disavows continued land theft and pervasive and routine colonial violence. For some, therefore, discourses of reconciliation and healing, and reconciliation as healing Indigenous and settler relations, obscures the truth of Canada’s founding. The question then becomes what, which, whose and what kinds of truths was the TRC seeking to document in its construction of a macro-narrative of IRS

history? What truths were publicly acknowledged? What truths went untold?  
And what does this process of truth-telling perform?

In her canonical text *Unspeakable Truths* (2001), Priscilla Hayner writes that the “most straightforward objective of a truth commission is sanctioned fact-finding” (20). But facts are never merely ‘found.’ As Niezen explains, truth commissions “are not just sites for gathering knowledge; but [...] also active in producing it” (103). Certain narratives can be constrained, while others elicited, and then harnessed into “a new history of the nation” (Ibid. 84).<sup>150</sup> Canada’s mandate reflects this notion, that by incorporating IRS history into the national fabric it is thought that “a new story will emerge, a reconciled national history” for a reconciled and healed country (Million 3); with the truth of personal stories of suffering as the source of regeneration and collective catharsis. The phrase “our common experiences” in the mandate’s opening passage suggests that the Commission is not privileging positivist forensic truths, based on “objective, corroborated evidence” (Gready 44),<sup>151</sup> but is looking to gather testimonies expressing lived experiences of the IRS system, especially from those “whose voices have long been silent or ignored” (Niezen 84). These stories are thus acknowledged by the Commission as *the* truth; “unadulterated, veridical reports”, and not “limited reports that are subject to selectivity and omissions of memory” (Ibid.). The use of the words “our common experiences”, however, also implies something else - an expectation that a unified truth will come into view from the statements the

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<sup>150</sup> This has been closely examined in relation to theatre and performance studies by scholars Catherine Cole (2009) and Yvette Hutchison (2013) in their investigations into South Africa’s TRC; and Ananda Breed (2014) in her analysis of Rwanda’s post-genocide *gacaca* courts.

<sup>151</sup> Paul Gready is speaking here of the four categories of truth identified by South Africa’s TRC. These were factual/forensic truth; personal/narrative truth; social truth; and healing/restorative truth.

Commission has yet to assemble. This expectation carries an implication that not only were the experiences of residential schools similar to one another, but that the TRC will primarily hear a one-sided story reflecting survivor experiences; a story of missing truths from the side of the perpetrators, the architects, its agents, and the beneficiaries of this federal policy.

Finally, according to the mandate, truth-telling will not only “set our spirits free” both individually and collectively, but will “pave the way to reconciliation” (“Schedule”). These words are given the value of ‘speech acts,’ whereby an utterance provides a function in communication, which implies that by saying something, we make it so (e.g. ‘I resign’). Expanding on the work of J.L Austin, John Searle explains that a serious and literal utterance made under what he describes as “conditions of [a] successful utterance” counts as a promise (407n4). What needs to be considered, then, is what the Commission is undertaking through these speech acts, and whether they truly can achieve this by speech alone.

Catherine Cole notes that “texts in and of themselves do not reality make” and “[i]n order to take effect, texts - whether in the form of passbooks or constitutions - require performance” (xi). We must explore, therefore, the ways in which the TRC’s healing mandate became, or failed to become, animated through the repertoire, which is activated, as Diana Taylor writes, by “presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by ‘being there,’ being a part of the transmission” (*Archive* 20). This transmission takes place through both verbal and non-verbal expressions; the latter including, in Carol Martin’s refining of Taylor’s theory in her writing on documentary theatre, “glances, gestures, body language, the felt experience of

space, and the proximity of bodies - [...] created by actors and directors according to their own rules of admissibility” (20).

This idea of ‘rules of admissibility’ is important in the context of the TRC. Although, unlike the South African Commission, Canada’s TRC did not have a preliminary screening or selection process before testimonies were publicly delivered; those wishing to participate could register either in advance, or at the gatherings, sometimes speakers would not initially plan to provide a statement, but later on during the events would decide to do so. The Commission did prompt, but not always receive, particular public performances of memory (stories of suffering) and public displays of certain emotions (such as tears) (Niezen 2013; Reynaud 2014). While copies of the mandate were not distributed at the events, this document would appear in re-drafted and summarised form through other informational material, including a booklet on “Frequently Asked Questions” for the statement gathering process. The booklet explains: “You are welcome and encouraged to share any aspect of you [*sic*] life with the TRC”, and offers 11 questions that “are intended to guide and may assist you in preparing to provide a statement to the TRC.” I list them as they appear in the document:

- What do you recall about your life before residential school?
- When did you first hear about Indian residential schools?
- What would a typical day at residential school be like for you?
- Were there specific tasks that you were responsible for at the school?
- Do you have any particular memories of people, events, or experiences that stand out in your mind, either good or bad?
- What was it like when you left residential school?
- How has residential school had an impact on who you are today?
- What impact has having family or friends attend or work at a residential had on you?
- What does Indian residential school mean to you?
- How can Canadians and Aboriginal peoples establish new relations with one another based on mutual understanding and respect?

- What does reconciliation mean to you? How will we know when reconciliation has taken place? (TRC, “Statement Gathering”)

For the remainder of the chapter, I discuss how the Commission’s healing mandate informed the repertoire of the TRC; and touching briefly upon how the mediated version of the proceedings impacted the live performance for those physically present in the venues. My examination unfolds through an analysis of the TRC’s programming, from which I interweave my own personal observations from attending the gatherings and witnessing testimonies. I will draw out some of the major themes that emerged from these statements, drawing upon how in a larger context certain moments affirmed or called into question the TRC’s dramaturgy. I also address the question of how:

Indigenous peoples can act as both witness and testifier in sharing their experiences of colonial policies in Canada. As witnesses, they have lived through these policies, surviving violent conflict and injustice. As givers of testimony, they rupture silences about colonial policies of assimilation and oppression, giving voice to long-denied or stifled experiences. (Angel 200)

I will then offer a theoretical exploration of the ways in which the Commission encouraged the idea that reconciliation is a positive and healing ritual practice. This association was integral to the TRC’s structure, resembling what Raymond Williams calls a “structure of feelings”, a term he uses to draw attention to “thought as felt and feeling as thought”, and how social experiences are “actively felt and lived” through symbolisation and emotion (132).

## **Witnessing the National Events**

The national events I attended in Saskatoon, Montreal, and Vancouver were structured in very similar ways, as illustrated by the programme booklet produced for the gatherings. The central image on the cover shows a contemporary photograph of a young Indigenous mother embracing her child. Behind her is a map of Canada, on which the relevant province or territory is highlighted. The heading lists the hosting city, the date, and the venue; in Saskatoon it was Prairieland Park Trade and Convention Centre, in Montreal it was the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, in Vancouver it was the Pacific National Exhibition.

The programmes open with a ‘Message from the Commissioners’ that begins with an acknowledgement of the traditional Indigenous territory on which the proceedings are taking place.<sup>152</sup> The message varies slightly between the three programmes, but they all emphasise that the event “is free and open to everyone”; and that these gatherings “will offer a unique opportunity for all Canadians, to hear first-hand the experiences of those who attended the schools, to bear witness to the legacy of the residential schools, and to celebrate Aboriginal culture” (TRC, Vancouver National Event Program 2).

As a live event, the first day of the national gatherings included a traditional ‘Welcome to the Territory’ ceremony, in which the Commissioners

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<sup>152</sup> It also informs the reader that the TRC has previously organised community hearings in preparation for the national events. These were designed by Indigenous communities (usually where residential schools were once in operation) who applied for funding and support from the TRC. However, neither the three Commissioners nor the staff of the TRC were always present at these hearings (Nagy, “Scope” 17). Furthermore, unlike the national events, which had a more standardised model, the community events were more flexible in their structure, which for scholar Rosemary Nagy reveals how a “grassroots level was built into the TRC’s institutional design” (Ibid.). While I do not examine these smaller events, it is worth noting that the TRC was not a monolithic national production. As a result, my analysis does not necessarily reflect that which took place outside of the gatherings that I observed personally.



granted thanks to the hosting Indigenous nation and its peoples for inviting the TRC to its territory. At the end of each of the four-day events, a representative from the next region to which the TRC would be travelling would offer a statement of welcome. From the outset of these gatherings, therefore, the Commission sought to signal its respect for Indigenous communities, their lands and their stories, acknowledging that Canada is not settler land, but Indigenous lands.

The ‘Share Your Truth’ section of the programmes list three spaces for those affected by the residential school system to offer their stories to the Commission.<sup>153</sup> The Commissioners Sharing Panels were the principal, and most formal setting of the TRC, taking place in large auditoria and attended by audiences that numbered from under 100 to well over 500 at any given time. At the events I attended, a timer was set in front of the speaker and a light would turn on after 15 minutes, letting them know that they had five minutes left; sometimes speakers were allowed to exceed their 20 minutes, particularly if individuals who had registered did not appear for their allotted time-slot. I cannot definitively say why this took place; perhaps some individuals decided at the last minute that they were not yet ready to bring their private life into the public sphere. If a scheduled speaker was not in the room the moment their name was announced, the Commissioner would proceed to the next name on their list. There would normally be only one of the three Commissioners

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<sup>153</sup> DVD copies of statements were given upon request to those who provided testimony. Because this was a voluntary process, the TRC allowed individuals to ask to have their testimonies withdrawn at any time from both its online and physical archive. Although the TRC’s mandate has ended, the National Research Centre is still welcoming submissions of online statements, without a time limitation.

overseeing each of the panels, but sometimes another would join.<sup>154</sup> Speakers were seldom interrupted whilst giving their statements, but the presiding Commissioner would sometimes interject if, for example, they were speaking too quickly or reading too quickly from a prepared document, which some had brought with them. The Commissioner took notes throughout the sessions (which had around 10 speakers), and at the end of each panel, would recount what they had heard back to those who provided testimony, letting the speakers know that they had been seen, heard, and believed.

Speakers could bring their own support onto the stage whilst offering their testimony, whether in this panel or in any other. Many brought friends, spouses, extended family, children, and/or grandchildren. There would also be at least one health support worker (mental health volunteers) present, who would sit behind or beside the speaker. If the speaker had their own support, additional volunteers would be present. Health workers, many of whom were residential school survivors themselves, would often place their hand onto the speaker's shoulder, offer tissues, or hold their arm if the speaker was visibly shaken, offering words of comfort and encouragement as speakers made their way through their testimony.

The presence of health support was integral to the performance of the national events and reflected the TRC's efforts to offer survivors a safe space to mourn. But it also signalled that they were *expected* to mourn (Niezen 2013;

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<sup>154</sup> As the number of individuals wishing to take part in the Sharing Panels increased later in the TRC's mandate, the Commissioners appeared less frequently together during this forum. This was done in order to accommodate for simultaneous Sharing Panels (this was arranged in Saskatoon, for example), and to allow more time for the delivery of testimonies. In my informal conversations with survivors and health care workers in Saskatoon, I learnt that with the first event in Winnipeg, speakers had only around five minutes, and were not given a timer, often requiring the Commissioners to interject, which for some caused anxiety while they delivered their statements.

Reynaud 2014), an issue I will return to. Identifiable by brightly coloured vests, health support workers seemed to be in every room of the venue, and at all times. They would not only offer support to those providing testimony, but also keep watch over the audience, approaching individuals who appeared distraught. They offered tissues, smudging (the cleansing of spaces, objects, and one's self), counselling, and prayers, illustrating some of the ways in which Indigenous cultural practices were an important frame of reference for the Commission.

A huge screen was positioned at each end of the stage bearing the Commissioner panels. One showed a close-up of the speaker, the other showed the Commissioner. The cameras were not, however, “neutral or innocent in their effect on witnesses” (Niezen 89). Although for the audiences, the projections mitigated the physical distance between those on stage and those at the back of the room, they had the additional effect of operating as what Erin Hurley identifies as a “feeling technology” (2010), “mechanisms that do something with feeling” and “orient the spectator's senses - notably her vision and hearing - to the action onstage” (*Theatre* 28). Close-up shots sometimes included ‘artistic effects’ from the cameraperson. During one of the testimonies in Halifax, for example, the zooming in on a witness's shaking hands was projected onto the screen (Niezen 89). Taken alongside the sound-system that amplified the voices of those who testified, the result was sonically and visually augmented performances of grief and trauma for those witnessing the testimony.

At the front of the space of the Sharing Panels there would be a raised platform with two tables, slanted at an angle, at opposite sides of the stage.

One was for the individual providing testimony and the other for the Commissioner. The position of the tables meant that speakers could direct their gaze either towards the Commissioner, or towards the audience. When giving their testimony, some speakers fixed their attention on the Commissioner; others faced the audience for the duration.

I witnessed a number of survivors directing often extremely intimate testimony towards their children, who would sometimes be sitting beside them, or in the audience; sometimes they did so even when their children were not present at the event at all. In Vancouver, residential school survivor Vivian Tom brought a poster of her daughter, who had been recently beaten to death and implored those in the room to take a copy to help her find the murderer.<sup>155</sup> When survivors spoke directly to their family members, it challenged the idea that it is the settler colonial relationship that is in primary need of reconciliation and healing. Some survivors apologised directly to their children for having failed them as a parent as a result of the effects of the residential schools; some broke down in tears as they did this. Many also talked about repeated suicide attempts and drug and alcohol addictions that stem from their experiences of abuse at the residential schools. Some survivors would tell those in the room that in giving their statements, this was the first time their spouses and children had heard their residential school story; many thanked the TRC for giving them the space to do so.

Individuals were not required to inform the Commission about what they were going to say before giving their statements, but particularly at the beginning of panels the Commissioners would sometimes reiterate to the

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<sup>155</sup> TRC, National Event. Video recording on file with author. 19 September 2013. Vancouver, BC.

upcoming speakers that they were not to mention the names of perpetrators. Some would follow this instruction, while others defied it, demonstrating that though the Panels were in some ways controlled spaces, they were also open to disruption.

When residential school survivor Leonard Alexcee was bringing his testimony to a close at the Vancouver event his son whispered into his ear, Alexcee then turned back to the microphone and raised his hand at Commissioner Justice Sinclair: “I got one little detail I missed out. [...] When this, when we started the Plint Case, I was the first one that opened that up”, using his index finger to accentuate this point. “I want people to know that.”<sup>156</sup> This led to an eruption of cheers from those present in the room.

Alexcee’s testimony reveals the importance of acknowledgement for survivors; that their voices, stories, and accomplishments be known, and that in giving their testimony they are not passive victims, but active agents in their own representation. As discussed earlier, former dormitory supervisor Arthur Plint was given a criminal conviction in 1995, meaning that Alexcee had not disobeyed the TRC’s ban on speakers mentioning the name of abusers unless they were deceased or had been found guilty of the accused allegations by a court of law. Nonetheless, his testimony illustrates a demand felt by survivors, that perpetrators of abuse must be publicly named, identified, and made accountable for the trauma they have caused, that they must not escape the public record and be shielded by anonymity.

During the national event in Montreal, however, one survivor did name the priest who abused him, making it known that he had escaped prosecution:

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<sup>156</sup> TRC, National Event. Video recording on file with author. 18 September 2013. Vancouver, BC.

“I, and many of my peers, have been raped by Frère Brochu and he will not face justice; on the contrary, he has been praised for the great work he did with the Indians. How can we reconcile with that?” (qtd. in Reynaud 374)<sup>157</sup>

Moments such as this reaffirmed that the stories from the side of the perpetrators remain untold, exposing the reconciliation project as a fundamentally unilateral undertaking (Ibid. 374-375).

Although the Commissioners “made a concerted effort to gather statements” from individuals who administered the schools, out of the over 6,750 statements that were provided, the TRC only “conducted ninety-six separate interviews with former staff and the children of former staff” (TRC, *Honouring* 26). As Eric Taylor Woods notes, among the few church representatives, priests, and staff members of residential schools “who did participate, none of them offered confessions of criminal abuse” (*Cultural* 132).

In addition, while provincial and local mayor and council representations made appearances at the TRC’s events, federal government bureaucrats remained largely absent.<sup>158</sup> This is despite the fact that the IRS system was officially in operation from the 1870s until the 1960s, with the remainder of the institutions closing in the late 1990s, meaning that a number of officials who were responsible for operating the policy, particularly in the

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<sup>157</sup> Anne-Marie Reynaud does not comment on what the response was from the Commissioner following this transgression, but states that Ogi gwan abik’s (the survivor’s pseudonym) decision to name his perpetrator “had no consequences” (375).

<sup>158</sup> For example, except for attending a closed ceremony to mark the end of the TRC at Rideau Hall in Ottawa in 2015, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who was in power throughout the entirety of the TRC process, did not appear at any of the Commission’s gatherings. Nor did he attend the release of the *Final Report*; instead, he sent Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt. In 2012, John Duncan, who was then Aboriginal Affairs Minister, made a brief appearance at the event hosted in Saskatoon. Niezen recounts that Duncan gave a speech that had ended “succinctly: ‘I know your culture. I know about your pain.’ Then he left early to catch a plane” (78).

eastern Arctic (Niezen 78), are still alive. A visible federal presence was limited mostly to an Aboriginal Affairs table located in a hall of the venue at the national gatherings amongst arts and crafts vendors, information kiosks, and education displays on IRS history, set-up by a series of different organisations.<sup>159</sup> But the Commission itself, Niezen insists, “symbolically reinforced the lack of federal participation in its events” (79). This absence is illustrated in the consent form that was required to be signed by those planning to offer a statement to the Commission. Under the heading of “Relationship to Indian Residential Schools” the document asks for one of four boxes to be ticked: “Former Student (Survivor),” “Former Staff,” “Intergenerational Survivor,” and “Other (specify)” (TRC, “Sharing Panel Registration”); there was no such option for government officials.

As a result, both the live hearings and the *Final Report* overwhelmingly, though not exhaustively, present the views and voices of former students, while perpetrators were largely excised from the official archive and sheltered from prosecution in the work of the Commission. This means that ‘the truth’ of the IRS system, as documented by the TRC, is skewed towards the stories of trauma victims, as opposed to narratives of culpability for Canada as a whole. Both the burden of memory and the process of reconciliation were to be borne by the survivors, expected to reconcile with absent perpetrators and government officials, as well as their own families and communities.

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<sup>159</sup> These were located in what the TRC called the ‘Learning Place’; this area also included numerous kiosks belonging to state and church archives, with its representatives bringing with them binders of photographs taken at the schools for survivors to look through and request copies from the archivists.

Both the *Final Report* and Ronald Niezen's *Truth & Indignation* (2013), highlight one particularly explosive testimony, which is worth discussing here. Although I did not witness it personally, I include it in my analysis so as to illuminate the politics of acknowledgement as it emerged through the institutional life of the TRC. It was a statement delivered by Brother Tom Cavanaugh, a former residential school teacher and now district superior of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate for British Columbia and Yukon, at the regional event in Victoria (2012). The following is an excerpt from his testimony:

What I experienced over the six years I was at Christie residential school was a staff, Native and non-Native alike, working together to provide as much as possible, a safe loving environment for the children attending Christie school. Was it a perfect situation? No, it wasn't a perfect situation...but again, there didn't seem to be, at that time, any other viable alternative in providing a good education for so many children who lived in relatively small and isolated communities. (qtd. in *Honouring* 14; ellipses in original)

Survivors and their families began to shout out: "Tell, tell the truth" (qtd. in *Ibid.*), Commissioner Justice Sinclair intervening to ask the audience to allow Cavanaugh to continue his statement. According to the *Report* Cavanaugh continued, but was "visibly shaken" (*Ibid.*): "I can honestly say that our men are hurting too because of the abuse scandal and the rift that this has created between First Nations and church representatives" (qtd. in *Ibid.*). As Niezen points out, this moment of rupture exposed the tension between narrative truth and historical truth; it also presented a performance of "defiance of the



survivor/oppressor partitions of memory and experience” that was embedded in the staging of the TRC events (94).

According to Niezen, some individuals, survivors, and church officials did not participate in the TRC gatherings because they had ‘unsayable’ truths that would disrupt the testimonial consensus being produced through the Commissioners Sharing Panels:

The things not being said also tend to be the stories that do not evoke strong emotion. Former students tend not to come forward to publicly narrate ordinary experience in residential schools, the more commonplace, quotidian indignities of excessive discipline and the shared yet deeply individual, loneliness of removal from families.

Those who think of themselves as having suffered only minimally or not at all also often think of themselves as having nothing to say. (59)

Niezen further maintains that one of the ‘unsayable’ truths was that members of the churches, who “represent the oppressors to most of those present”, were expected to fulfil a performance of contrition in their public statements given to the Commissioners (94). Focusing on the recollections of former staff from the Oblate order, Niezen interviews priests, nuns, and members of monastic orders who were indignant that they had all been lumped together and accused of being perpetrators by the TRC. In documenting the experiences of individuals who administered residential schools “with love and joy” (141), he argues that the TRC failed to “create as complete an historical record as possible of the IRS system and legacy” (TRC, “Schedule”), and that the TRC “want[ed] to hear from the tortured and the damned, not from those left miraculously unscathed” (Niezen 86). Although Niezen is non-Indigenous, it

is important to mention that he is not alone in making what is a controversial argument, though he is one of the few people to date who have explored it through the lens of the TRC, and the first to have done so through a comprehensive ethnographic investigation of the Commission.

As the Commission toured the country, Cree playwright and novelist Thomson Highway, who as a child was sent to Guy Hill Indian Residential School, repeatedly told journalists that he did not have any interest in following the activities of the Commission: “All we hear is the negative stuff, nobody’s interested in the positive, the joy in that school” (Highway, “Cree”). Although he had been abused by priests, Highway would state in another interview that “[because] of the residential [school] system, by the time I was 12, I was trilingual. Because of the residential [school] system, I learned how to play the piano and I play like a dream” (Highway, “Playwrights”).

The TRC did call for and document (see *Interim Report 6*) ‘positive’ stories about the IRS system. For example, the “Frequently Asked Questions” booklet discussed earlier, invites ‘good’ and ‘bad’ memories that students may have had from when they were at the institutions. However, ‘positive’ stories are rare in the TRC’s various reports. It is worth noting here Audrey Chapman and Patrick Ball’s distinction between macro-truths and micro-truths (2001). They argue “that truth commissions are far better suited to pursue what we have termed ‘macro-truth,’ the assessment of contexts, causes, and patterns of human rights violations, than ‘micro-truth’ dealing with the specifics of particular events, cases, and people” (41). Not everybody who went to residential school was abused; and some, who were abused, like Highway, may emphasise their ‘positive’ stories, but this does not make the policy to

assimilate Indigenous children, to take them away from their families and communities for seven generations, with the intent to destroy Indigenous cultures and identity ‘good.’ These competing truths also reveal how the process of configuring a consensualised memory from hundreds of thousands of heterogeneous individual memories in the service of reconciling ‘the nation’ is fraught with ideological issues.

Attempting to ‘civilise’ Indigenous children, the residential schools were spaces dedicated to regulating emotion. In their testimonies, many survivors would discuss the extreme discipline they experienced, and how they were prohibited from exhibiting any feelings whatsoever. Chief Fred Robbins recounted how he was reduced to an automaton: “It was line up, go to church. Line up. Go to school. Line up, get counted. Line up. Line up. Line up.”<sup>160</sup> By sharing their stories in the public forum of the TRC, survivors would challenge the regulatory emotional system of the residential schools by reclaiming their emotional experiences as valid.

Although emotions of sorrow dominated the panels, laughter, joy, and humour would sometimes make their way into survivor testimonies as a means of celebrating Indigenous resilience. This would often take place when survivors recounted acts of everyday resistance, and in so doing, challenged discourses of traumatic memory and victimhood that circulated through the national coverage of the events.

In Vancouver, survivor Agnes Edwards smiled as she recalled a moment in which as a child she quietly laughed while a nun attempted to strap her, but the strap kept getting caught in the beads of the nun’s dress. Edwards

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<sup>160</sup> TRC, National Event. Video recording on file with author. 19 September 2013. Vancouver, BC.

laughed again when she mentioned an occasion in which she was found making home-made brew from ingredients stolen from a pantry: “We didn’t get expelled we had to stay there.” She concluded her testimony by exclaiming: “We’re all still here yet [sic] [*cheers from audience*] and we’re all proud of our heritage and we’ll be here forever and ever.”<sup>161</sup> Such remarks would regularly receive enthusiastic applause, whistles, drumming, and shouts of approval from the audience.

At other times, testimonies were followed by silence. Niezen describes one statement given during a TRC Urban Inuit Community Hearing in Ottawa by a survivor who “stopped his testimony, pulled his chair back from the table and wept deeply, his body heaving” (68). After he concluded his statement, the “audience was itself sympathetically grief-stricken and silent” (Ibid.). The next testimony was again met with silence, “but about half the audience stood” (Ibid.).

At the back of the spaces in which the Commissioners Sharing Panels were held, translators sat in booths simultaneously translating the hearings.<sup>162</sup> While not available at all of the national events, perhaps in part due to limited funds, at the gatherings I attended this service was offered in English, French,

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<sup>161</sup> (Ibid.)

<sup>162</sup> The Research Centre is still translating testimonies. While some who provided testimony may encourage that theirs be available in English, others may seek that this knowledge remains within their communities and not translated into the ‘coloniser’s language.’ I recognise that translation is a highly critical issue - especially regarding the performance of public testimonies, and even more so in the context of IRS history. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to explore not only the ethics of translation regarding the archive, but also the matter of what was included, lost, or mistranslated by interpreters during the live event; as well as how the Commission on the IRS system may have “produced particular kinds of truths” through this process, as has been discussed in Catherine Cole’s analysis of South Africa’s TRC (68). This is a complex topic that requires research.

and in several Indigenous languages,<sup>163</sup> though English remained the predominant language.

Survivors spoke of a profound sense of loss from being forbidden to speak their own language while at a residential school. Many grieved from their inability to communicate with their families after returning from one of these institutions. One of the major themes from the testimonies, however, was the importance of revitalising Indigenous languages in their own communities, with many expressing the view that re-learning their mother tongue has been played a crucial part in their individual recovery and healing process, which for many survivors began long before the TRC was established. Some Indigenous speakers delivered their statements either partly or, less frequently, entirely in an Indigenous language. These moments performed not just as acts of public resistance against the assimilative goals of the IRS system, but as acts of Indigenous cultural resurgence against the backdrop of a colonial present.

Also open to the public were the Sharing Circles, facilitated by members of the TRC's Survivor Committee. Unlike the Sharing Panels, the Sharing Circles did not take place on raised stages, nor were there large television screens projecting live images of the speakers. The forum was less intimidating and more informal, taking place in smaller rooms and with much smaller audiences. At the front of the space there would be a circle of chairs, with rows of seats arranged at the back for the gathered witnesses. As individuals recounted their experiences - although there was no timer, 20 minutes was generally recommended - they would face not a Commissioner,

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<sup>163</sup> In Saskatoon: Dene, Saulteaux, Plains Cree, and Woodland Cree. In Montreal: Mohawk (only for the opening and closing ceremonies), Algonquin, Inuktitut, Cree, Atikamekw, and Montagnais/Innu. In Vancouver: Secwépemc, Lil'wat, and Halq'eméylem.

but a circle of individuals made up primarily of survivors. Whereas in the Sharing Panels those giving testimony sat across the Commissioner and the authority of the Commissioners would be enforced, in the Sharing Circles people instead entered the circle as equals.

The national gatherings of the TRC were largely public events, but elements of the productions, such as the Private Statement Gathering sessions, were closed off.<sup>164</sup> Those testifying during these sessions were joined only by a Statement Gatherer, who recorded their statement (video or audio), and health support in a room marked off from public view so as to provide a “safe and respectful environment” that would respect an individual’s “culture, dignity and privacy.”<sup>165</sup> Tobacco and a Grandfather Rock were offered.<sup>166</sup> There was no time limit for the Private Statements, although “a 1.5 hour maximum [was] encouraged.”<sup>167</sup> These testimonies would become part of the national IRS archive; if individuals wished, their identities would not be disclosed. The sessions were offered to anyone who wished for privacy, and/or those who felt they needed more time to tell their story to the Commission. It also served as a way for the Commission to acknowledge the fact residential school stories, and the experiences of their legacies, require more than 15 minutes, and that some survivors preferred not to present their testimony on a live national stage.

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<sup>164</sup> The Commission also travelled to correctional institutions to gather statements, which according to its *Final Report* was done in “recognizing the high rates of incarceration of Aboriginal peoples and how the experience of residential schools has contributed to the kinds of personal struggles that may lead to incarceration” (TRC, *Honouring* 30).

<sup>165</sup> TRC, National Event. “How to Share Your Truth Information Session.” Video recording on file with author. 18 September 2013. Vancouver, BC.

<sup>166</sup> An Indigenous symbol, Grandfather Rocks are animate beings, carriers of memory, “a physical reminder of the connection between humans and the rest of creation” (Elser 4).

<sup>167</sup> (Ibid.)

Before concluding my analysis of the ‘Share Your Truth’ programming, I would like to return to my earlier analysis regarding the TRC’s healing mandate, and my discussion of how “the ‘path’ to recovery is less certain” (Heddon, *Autobiography* 57) than what is suggested in the claim that ‘Revealing is Healing,’ which, like South Africa’s TRC, oriented the work of Canada’s Commission.

Commissioner Wilson has stated that “[h]ealing is the hidden word in our mandate” and that “[h]ealing is the purpose behind truth” (qtd. in Howsam 53). It is important, however, to comment on how Indigenous peoples have related to the TRC’s therapeutic model. During the national events I attended, I witnessed a number of survivors who articulated a perception that the process of telling their story to the TRC was part of their “ongoing healing journey”; some would close their statement by stating that “I feel lighter” [TRC, National Event, Vancouver, 20 September 2013].

This was not a universal experience, however. As David Garneau (Métis) notes, “the public racking up of this pain [from the residential schools] has caused a great deal of (mostly unreported) devastation to individuals, families, and communities” (Garneau and Yeh 74). One documented example of this followed the 2011 national event in Inuvik, as a result of mental health staff being overstretched during the gathering. A local health worker in Inuvik recounts:

[The TRC] re-traumatized us. [...] We went through the residential school. Some of our people went through that again and there was nobody there to say, well what can I do to help you now? Do you want to go for counselling? They tell us there are facilities across Canada

where our survivors can go and get after-care. I know of people who have applied for after-care who are still waiting. Long lines. People who have waited so long they've gone right back into drinking.

(Jerome qtd. in Niezen 111-112)

That the TRC on the IRS system *can* re-traumatise survivors was firmly rejected by Commissioner Wilson during a Sharing Panel in Saskatoon. She stated that she did not “want to believe” that the trauma people recounted in their testimony “would also leave here and follow the survivors out of this room and out of this gathering.” Wilson transferred the responsibility of this away from the TRC, saying “surely, we are all challenged, together, to find ways to leave some of those things here. Once they've been stated at the front to set them down, and not to pick them up again, and not to take them home.”<sup>168</sup>

This is, of course, easier said than done. Unlike the TRC, trauma has no time restrictions. As scholar Cathy Caruth (1995) argues, trauma cannot simply be left behind; it is experienced through its repeated returns. Put differently, traumatic memory is a memory of an event that is “not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event” (Ibid. 4-5; see also Chambers 43).

Commissioner Wilson, however, implies not only that trauma can be resolved through a single act of testimony that might last just 15 or 20 minutes, but also that the Commission was a site to which a survivor might come in order to be ‘cured.’ It is a revealing statement as regards the TRC’s

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<sup>168</sup> TRC, National Event. Video recording on file with author. 23 June 2012. Saskatoon, SK.



politics of acknowledgement, because it forces us to consider a difficult question: Who is truly benefitting from the process?

Although the primary function of the TRC's events was to offer a forum for individuals to share their residential school stories, the programming contained other elements, too. For example, the gatherings included recreational components that were often targeted at inducing a sense of release from the serious and sensitive material that stemmed from the sharing panels and circles. There were also educational components, organised in an effort to raise public awareness of the IRS system. Like many of the scheduled forums, these activities were often concomitant with the testimony session, and took place in a series of different rooms within the large venues. To mention just a few, there were screenings of "relevant films" (TRC, Saskatoon National Event Program 25)<sup>169</sup> and guest lectures on a variety of topics.

In Montreal, there was a panel on the 'Treaty of Montreal & Reconciliation'; in Vancouver there was a panel on 'Honouring Women's Wisdom.' 'Reconciliation Breakfasts' and 'Reconciliation Lunches' were sponsored by the churches and were free for survivors. Saskatoon hosted a Round Dance and 'World Gym Activities,' which included a Zumba lesson. As the programme explained: "It is extremely important that this healing process be honoured and perhaps further enhanced by the inclusion of physical activity" (TRC, Saskatoon National Event Program 26). In Vancouver, there

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<sup>169</sup> Although these films were shown in an effort to educate the public about the IRS system, screenings also became sites of re-traumatisation. In Vancouver, a survivor collapsed experiencing a flashback during the screening of the docudrama *We Were Children* (2012), a film about two survivors who as young children were forced to attend a residential school. Outside of the tent in which the film was shown, the man screamed and his body convulsed in pain. Health support workers intervened and wrapped him in a blanket, while singers sang traditional healing songs, explaining to the gathered crowd that this was being done, "to leave him grounded and not with a heavy heart" [TRC, National Event, Vancouver, 20 September 2013].

was a hockey game “honouring Survivors” (TRC, Vancouver National Event Program 10). A Talent Night for “an evening of laughter” (TRC, Montreal National Event Program 31) was held at all three events. In Montreal, one of the TRC staff members performed as Elvis to the great enjoyment of the crowd and the Commissioners. All three national gatherings also had a free concert with line-ups that included high-profile Indigenous artists. According to the master of ceremonies in Saskatoon, the entertainment on offer was provided so as “to give us a break from some of the things that are going on at this national event. So we can laugh, and feel good about ourselves, feel good about our people” [TRC, National Event, Saskatoon, 26 April 2012].

The entertainment not only provided moments during the events to lift everyone’s spirits after hours of testimony, but also functioned as positive spaces from which a sense of togetherness and community-building was fostered by the Commission. This bears relation to the idea that theatre invites disparate individuals to gather as a group, interact, and share emotional experiences as a temporary community, which is central to the field. As Jill Dolan writes, “live performance provides a place where people come together, embodied and passionate, to share experiences of meaning making and imagination that can describe fleeting intimations of a better world” (2). Describing this affective sensation as “utopian performatives”, this is felt by audiences who in becoming “participatory publics” experience a feeling of *communitas*, which “might become a model for other social interactions” outside of the theatre (11). Drawing on Victor Turner, Dolan describes *communitas* as an event in which “spectators’ individuality becomes finely

attuned to those around them, and a cohesive if fleeting feeling of belonging to the group bathes the audience” (Ibid.).

Throughout each of the events I attended, this feeling of belonging described by Dolan was apparent, a result of the Commission’s attempt to foster an “affective atmosphere” (Brennan 2004). Teresa Brennan writes that although affect may be “social or psychological in origin”, it is also “responsible for bodily changes; some are brief changes, as in a whiff of the room’s atmosphere, some longer lasting” (1). Affect can belong to more than a single body; it can be transmitted between bodies with “bodies literally affecting one another and generating intensities” (Stewart 128).

According to Sara Ahmed, our bodies carry signifiers that shape the affective mood felt in a space (*Promise* 40). Ahmed is careful, however, not to advocate a model of emotional contagion (cf. Tomkins 1963), when an individual observes a facial expression or posture and then unconsciously and quickly imitates it, and in so doing absorbs another individual’s affective state. This is a theory that assumes the existence of an automatic feedback loop, which permeates and ripples through a group of spectators gathered in a shared space, as in a theatre. This can cause a group to experience the same emotions in uniform time, a theory that Dolan pursues in her study of *communitas* as shared affect.<sup>170</sup>

Although individuals may be under the impression that they are experiencing the same feeling, however, they do not “necessarily have the same relationship to the feeling” (Ahmed, *Cultural* 10). In the realm of

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<sup>170</sup> This is one of the key theories advanced by cognitive and performance studies scholar Bruce McConachie (2008). He contends that: “Emotional contagion in a theatre is automatic and usually very quick. Audiences will tend to laugh, cry, and even gasp simultaneously. The more spectators join together in one emotion, the more empathy shapes the emotional response of the rest” (97).

theatre, Helen Freshwater points out that audiences are not “a single entity”, but an assembled group of individuals (5). Accounts that describe audiences as an ‘it’ therefore risk “obscuring the multiple contingencies of subjective response, context and environment which condition an individual’s interpretation of a particular performance event” (Ibid.). That one person’s experience of a production will be different from another’s stands to reason.

Such theorisations are useful when considering the Commission’s attempt to engender an affective atmosphere by positioning reconciliation as a positive embodied practice with its public displays of emotion presented as having a ‘healing’ effect, and how this dramaturgical choice was reified or challenged by its participants. Anne-Marie Reynaud suggests the Commission’s reconciliation imperative operated through the construction of emotional norms (2014), or what sociologist Arlie Hochschild terms as “emotional labour” ([1983] 2003), the social techniques of control that manage what emotions are to be expressed in the context of a particular process (7).<sup>171</sup> Erin Hurley has expanded this theorisation to “the work theatre does in making, managing, and moving feeling in all its types (affect, emotions, moods, sensations) in a publicly observable display”, which draw audiences into the “symbolic universe of the theatrical performance” (*Theatre* 9-10).

My own enquiry into the ways in which reconciliation was constituted as an emotional practice will be explored through discussion of the enactment of two rituals, the Bentwood Box and the collection of ‘Tear Tissues.’ In making this analysis I do not maintain an ontological distinction between

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<sup>171</sup> Hochschild uses the example of flight attendants, who have to greet everyone and manage every situation with “the ease of a smile” (*Managed* 8).

emotion and affect, nor do I maintain a dualism of mind and body. Although the purpose of this chapter is not to tease out definitions of ‘affect,’ ‘feelings,’ and ‘emotions,’ it is worth quoting Eric Shouse’s distinction between these terms. He writes that “affect is not a personal feeling. Feelings are *personal* and *biographical*, emotions are *social*, and affects are *prepersonal*” (2005; emphasis in original).<sup>172</sup>

This study, however, is concerned with excavating the ways in which emotions are conditioned by a specific social and historic context (Scheer 193); how, as Sara Ahmed writes, “emotions circulate between bodies” and why some stick while others slide over their surfaces (*Cultural* 4). It is to this end that my investigation explores what emotions as practices do, what meaning they generate as repertoire, and how they shaped the TRC’s dramaturgy.

In addition to the visible presence of health support workers, one of the ways in which the TRC constructed a “culturally appropriate” (“Schedule”) space was by infusing its events with Indigenous symbolism. As discussed previously, some scholars regard this as little more than a cursory nod towards Indigenous knowledge systems unable sufficiently to destabilise the Western paradigm that structured this official body.

Indigenous ceremonies and practices were present at all of the national gatherings I attended. Many remained consistent throughout, but some were adopted or added by the Commission in an effort to reflect the cultures of the Indigenous communities local to where the TRC was holding its proceedings. They included smudging before, during, and after forums, the lighting of the

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<sup>172</sup> For an overview of this field, what Ticineto Clough has called “the affective turn” (2007), see Thompson (119-134).

Qulliq (an Inuit ceremonial stone oil lamp), the ‘Welcome to the Territory’ ceremonies, drumming, the singing of healing songs by health support workers between panels and when survivors were visibly re-traumatised, cedar brushings, and sacred pipe ceremonies.

One of the most central ways the TRC incorporated Indigenous symbols into its work was the ritual of the Bentwood Box.<sup>173</sup> Formed from a single piece of red cedar and elaborately carved, the Bentwood Box was commissioned by the TRC and created by Coast Salish artist Luke Marston in 2009.<sup>174</sup> Sitting centre-stage at all of the Commissioners Sharing Panels I attended, the Box, according to the Commission, “reflects the strength and resilience of Residential School Survivors and their descendants and honours those survivors who are no longer living” (TRC, BC National Event Program 4). As the Commission made its way across Canada, individuals were encouraged to make offerings, “to commemorate personal journeys towards healing and reconciliation” (Ibid.). Described as sacred gifts, these tangible objects were deposited into the Box during the ‘Expressions of Reconciliation’ sessions, which the programme booklets outline as an opportunity for “[i]ndividual organizations and representatives of the parties to the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement [to] make statements, presentations, or apologies directly to Survivors” (TRC, Montreal National Event Program 31).

Speakers, often dignitaries and officials but also residential school survivors, would come on to the stage and explain how their offering contributes to reconciliation. These gifts included: documents (such as

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<sup>173</sup> These are “vermin-proof, airtight kerfed boxes - once used for storage of such foodstuffs as oolichan oil and dried fish as well as a protective container for ceremonial clothing” (Niezen 66).

<sup>174</sup> Images of the Box can be found here <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=42>; accessed 1 September 2016.

transcriptions of apologies from the churches); books on the subject of the IRS system; in Vancouver, newly discovered paintings made by children at Port Alberni Residential School were returned to their owners as part of the ceremony, with framed photographs deposited into the Box; clothing was offered that was worn by children while they were at an institution; a broken brick from a demolished residential school was given; so too was a suitcase belonging to a survivor whose mother had packed for him before being sent to a residential school; the United Church offered a broken chalice; and the Saskatoon police chief presented his police hat. By the end of its mandate, the TRC collected 1,300 objects, which are now preserved, along with the Box, at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (McCue).<sup>175</sup>

It is important to note how gift giving was central to Indigenous diplomacy in early treaty-making processes, in the securing of trade-relationships, and the building of alliances with European settlers, as this evoked the broader performance genealogy that the Bentwood Box ritual was implicitly recalling. This is, of course, a long and varied history, but Paulette Regan's overview of how these diplomatic practices were viewed differently by Indigenous communities and colonisers is worth quoting:

Some traders, government officials, and missionaries were astute intercultural interlocutors who not only recognized the importance of such ceremonial practices to Indigenous people in maintaining good relations but genuinely sought to understand their complexities. But, as the settlement process unfolded across North America, many colonial officials representing the settler majority came to view such exchanges

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<sup>175</sup> Survivors were also invited to offer gifts to the Bentwood Box at the Private Statement area. Some speakers presented an offering as part of their statement to the Commissioners Sharing Panels.

simply at the cost of doing business in the New World in order to access Native lands and resources. (*Unsettling* 101-102)

This latter view gained increasing traction following the end of the War of 1812, when Indigenous peoples were no longer perceived by settlers as valued military allies. It was during this period that such ceremonial practices were increasingly understood by colonial officials as impeding their mission of white civility, and so they were banned. As Chapter 1 sought to demonstrate, this process was deeply entwined with the construction of the IRS system. The TRC's integrating of 'Expressions of Reconciliation' sessions into its programming, allocating these with a special timeslot (they rarely overlapped with other forums, and so they were regularly attended by large audiences), revealed the Commission's effort to impress upon its audiences that reconciliation is more than mere discourse: it is ultimately about healing settler-Indigenous relations through the use of public ritual.

During the 'Expressions of Reconciliation,' which took place once or twice a day, a specific ceremonial protocol was followed. Each object was placed in the Bentwood Box with all parties, the speakers and the three Commissioners, extending their hands so as to touch and suspend the gift above the vessel - their gaze directed towards the attending media gathered at the front of the space taking photos - before it would then carefully be placed into the Box. In these moments, the inanimate material objects would undergo a transformation into central props (theatrical property) to the performance of the TRC. Andrew Sofer's definition explains that objects on stage are animated through movement by "literally putting them into play" (vi). A prop is therefore "something an object becomes, rather than something an object is"



(12), and something that “demands actual embodiment and motion on the stage in order to spring to imaginative life” (vi).

In her analysis of how material objects can shape and direct human behaviour, cultural historian Robin Bernstein (2011) offers a theory of objects that goes further than Sofer’s definition. According to Bernstein, things are not only enlivened through movement, but the thing itself invites certain behaviour:

The method of reading material things as scripts aims to discover not what any individual actually did but rather what a thing invited its users to do. This act of scripting, this issuing of a culturally specific invitation, is itself a historical event - one that can be recovered and then analyzed as a fresh source of evidence. (11)

Unpacking what this Bentwood Box ritual performs, in an attempt to “coax the archive into divulging the repertoire” (Ibid. 130), it is also worth considering it in parallel with Catherine Bell’s theory of “ritualization”, which interrogates the performance of rituals “as a strategic mode of practice” (114). According to Bell: “Ritualization involves the differentiation and privileging of particular activities”, which are marked off through various ways. They take place in “a delineated and structured space”, they are given “a special periodicity”, they are enacted through “restricted codes of communication to heighten the formality of movement and speech”, they have a “distinct and specialized personnel”, and they involve “a particular constituency” (204-205). Ritual action is therefore fundamentally tied to power and the construction of power structures. Through the repeated enactment of these norms, ritualisation leaves its participants with the impression of consensus (Ibid. 210).

I read both the Box and the gestures/props of reconciliation as functioning as “scriptive things” (Bernstein 2011), inviting individuals on stage to perform through what anthropologist Laura Nader terms enactment of a “harmony ideology”:

[A]n emphasis on conciliation, recognition that resolution of conflict is inherently good and that its reverse - continued conflict or controversy - is bad or dysfunctional, a view of harmonious behavior as more civilized than disputing behavior, the belief that consensus is of greater survival than controversy. (2)

According to Niezen, whilst offerings during the earlier national events “were deposited with little ceremony, simply with an introduction of the meaning of the object and its direct placement into the box” (66), it was only in later gatherings – why this was the case remains unclear - that greater reverence was given to the ritual of deposition:

Bodily movements, gestures, intentional slowness, respectful silence - and, on completion of the act of deposition, smiles, embraces, and applause from the audience all spoke to the perception of sacredness that the process had acquired. (67)

The controlled and rhythmically-attuned body movements, the prepared speeches, the reverential tone of voice from the speakers, the displayed feelings of unity and generosity, the objects that were created especially for these sessions, as well as those recovered and formally gifted, with all parties touching the object, thus displaying that they were being touched *by* the object, and then the measured depositing of these into the Box, were actions inculcating a ritual scripting of how to publicly perform reconciliation.

Another way to understand this is as the crafting of what Deborah Gould terms as an “emotional habitus” (2009). Expanding upon the work of Hochschild, Deborah Gould explains that “emotional habitus” is a structural habitus that “contains an emotional pedagogy, a template for what and how to feel” (34). Referencing the affective adoption of Pierre Bourdieu, she suggests that:

Operating beneath conscious awareness, the emotional habitus of a social group provides members with an emotional disposition, with a sense of what and how to feel, with labels for their feelings, which schemas about what feelings are and what they mean, with ways of figuring out and understanding what they are feeling. (Ibid.)

With this ritual repeating many dozens of times over a span of four years across the country, an emotional reconciliatory habitus was performed, one which transmitted the notion to those on stage and those witnessing the events, both online and physically present, that emotional practices engendering reconciliation as a feeling is the same thing as reconciling in practice (Robinson, “Feeling” 280). The Box itself became an embodiment of public affect that can be read through what Ann Cvetkovich describes as an archive of feelings, “repositories of feelings and emotion, which are encoded not only in their content of the texts themselves but in the practice that surround their production and reception” (7). It was not only the Box, therefore, but through the rituals surrounding the box that these symbolic gifts became “saturated with affect” and affective value (Ahmed, *Cultural* 11).

Returning to the history of gift exchange and its traditional significance, in his writing on the Ojibwe gift giving economy in the Lake

Superior region during the era of the fur trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Bruce White stresses the ways in which this practice facilitated reciprocal relations: “Depending on the situations in which they were given and on the words and ceremonies that accompanied them, gifts communicated something about what each partner to the relationship wanted” (30). Rauna Kuokkanen further emphasises that as a central principle of Indigenous philosophy, gift giving exceeded an economical and market form of exchange. It was instead:

[B]uilt upon a particular worldview characterized by a perception of the natural environment as a living entity which gives its gifts and abundance to people if it is treated with respect and gratitude [...]. Central to this perception is that [...] [s]ocial ties apply to everybody and everything, including the land. (258)

This history is problematic in the context of the TRC, where in my experience of observing ‘Expressions of Reconciliation,’ non-Indigenous participants would often discuss reconciliation without mentioning the issue of land. My notes from one of these sessions in Vancouver noted the following phrases I heard: “mutual respect”; “new relationship”; “reconciliation is not a onetime event...it’s a way of life”; “living into reconciliation...it’s a habit of the heart.”<sup>176</sup> But what do these phrases mean, and to what action do they commit the speakers, both in the moment of its utterance and thereafter? Although such statements may have, at least from the perspective of its speakers, proffered an “affective vision of how the world might be better” (Dolan 6),

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<sup>176</sup> These sessions broadly recall the expressions of regret that were part of the Australian National Sorry Day (now annual) and the Sorry Books Campaign (hundreds of books were distributed in which thousands of Australians added personal apologies for their country’s assimilationist policies) that were initiated in 1998; see Ahmed (2004).

many of these gestures of reconciliation refrained from making specific commitments to decolonising the colonial present of Canada. Instead, they threaten to keep the colonial project intact.<sup>177</sup>

According to Martha Minow, truth commissions “can help set a tone and create public rituals to build a bridge from a terror-filled past to a collective, constructive future” (*Between* 89). The ‘Expressions of Reconciliation’ were a space in which the promise of reconciliation was presented as *the* gift; the gift of cultivating harmonious relations between settler and Indigenous peoples. By ascribing sacredness and scripting veneration towards the Box these sessions produced certain “rules of admissibility” (C. Martin 20), regulating what behavioural patterns were to be followed and what emotional repertoires were to be publicly displayed in the name of reconciliation.

The ritualisation of the Box, therefore, was a ritual designed to cement both the legitimacy of the TRC and of reconciliation as a national project; reconciliation’s very actualisation (Niezen 67; Reynaud 371, 377-378). The enactments described here were not to be temporary, or what performance scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte terms a temporary “aesthetic experience spectators undergo in a performance when being infected by the emotions of others [becomes] a liminal experience, the experience of being betwixt and between, of standing on a threshold” (37). Instead, the Bentwood Box was a ritual action performed in the hope of bringing Canada into a “state of liminality”, a transformation that is “irreversible” (Ibid.).

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<sup>177</sup> Robinson (2014) offers a similar line of thinking in his analysis of the ‘It Matters to Me’ town-hall moderated discussions that took place during the TRC events in Victoria and Saskatoon. He argues that they became spaces in which settlers described reconciliation “in the currency of friendship”, but “avoided making individual commitments or enumerating how they might be responsible for future change” (“Feeling” 285).

In short, these rituals amounted to an attempt to perform a transition from Canada's violent past to a reconciled present and future. But it was a transition that sought to avoid the most uncomfortable, complex, and practical question of all: that of land. As this study has argued throughout, to talk about the land, is to challenge the legitimacy of the settler state's national identity and national stories, and ultimately, the settler state itself.

Writing in 2004, legal scholar Annalise Acorn criticised settler participation in Indigenous ceremonial practices when settlers "avoid having to cough up more tangible and useful rights" (59). According to Acorn, when such public acts are done without addressing issues of material reparations, such as the return of land, they become token intercultural performances of "political correctness" (58): "A white show of obeisance to Aboriginal ritual is not, and cannot be required to entail, authentic respect" (59).

Seen this way, the 'Expressions of Reconciliation' were not only a site of "feeling labour" (Hurley 2010), but one which, from my own experience of witnessing non-Indigenous participation, ultimately performed a labour of distraction, or what Matt James calls "reparation displacement", which, he argues, "works [...] subtly, redirecting understandings of responsibility" ("Scaling" 363). The result was a continuation of the colonial relationship, masked by expressions of reconciliation.

Another re-invented tradition deeply embedded in the live performance of the national events was the gathering of 'Tear Tissues.' Tears were one of the most potent symbols of these gatherings, as not only were they dramaturgically structured as positive, they were also treated and acknowledged as sacred by the TRC (Niezen 62-67). Packets of tissues were

distributed on seats throughout the rooms of the venues, with boxes of tissues arranged on the tables for the speakers during the Commissioners Sharing Panels. Whilst these Panels took place, health support workers walked up and down the aisles handing out tissues and collecting these into bags; sometimes they were plain brown, at other times white with the label, 'For emotional care.'

Everyone who participated in the TRC events were reminded repeatedly by the Commissioners, emcees, moderators, health workers, and other staff that tissues were not to be thrown in the garbage, but either collected in designated 'Tear Tissue' bags, deposited into 'Tear Tissue' baskets located in the lobby, or brought individually to the Sacred Fire, located on or near the venue's premises. Private tears, in other words, became the property of the TRC.

Like the gathering of the tear tissues, the Sacred Fire was a new 'tradition' re-invented for the purposes of the TRC (Niezen 64). Rooted in an associated Anishinaabe belief of the Seven Grandfather Teachings (love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility, and truth),<sup>178</sup> this symbolism was also captured in the TRC's logo, which shows seven flames arranged in a circle.

According to the TRC, "[t]he Lighting of the Sacred Fire happens before we begin each National Event to ensure that the Sprits and the Teachings guide and protect us while the Commission does its work" (TRC, Montreal National Event Program 14). These would burn throughout the national gatherings, whereupon the ashes would be collected and then

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<sup>178</sup> I am unable to comment further on how each of these teachings shaped the events, as in my own experience, this information seemed to be mentioned only in passing by the emcees, the Commissioners, and the speakers giving testimony.

entrusted to a member of the TRC Survivor Committee until the next national event. A Firekeeper (a role traditionally given to men) had the responsibility of keeping the fire lit and for collecting the tissues from the venue and bringing these to the fire. Strict protocol was followed at this site; no garbage was to be thrown in, and no drugs or alcohol were allowed on site. Individuals were invited to bring offerings of tobacco or sage, as well as the tissues of tears, which would then be put into the fire “so that they [the tears] can be released to the Creator as part of [Indigenous] healing” (Colter qtd. in Niezen 65).

The tissues and the ritual of their gathering sent orienting signals that the TRC was a place to mourn, but it also regulated *how* to mourn: by weeping. I will restrict this discussion to one specific example of how this dramaturgical choice was disrupted by an example of a refusal to exorcise an internal reality through weeping, and thus challenged the Commission’s fostering of an emotional habitus of “feeling reconciliation” (Robinson 2014). In making this analysis, I recognise that as Martha Minow writes:

There can be pride and strength in seeing oneself as an actor on the world stage, and as one who can educate the world while also exposing personal suffering in a public way. Tears in public will not be the last tears, but knowing that one’s tears are seen may grant a sense of acknowledgment that makes grief less lonely and terrifying. (*Between* 67-68)

I do not seek to minimise the fact that for hundreds of years in Canada, the right to mourn the violence done by the IRS system was withheld from Indigenous communities (Carter 420). My focus here is to emphasise that tears



were privileged by the Commission as representing a more positive, even superior, emotion than feelings such as indignation, what Niezen identifies as “the feeling of injustice” (17).

As discussed earlier, Niezen documents how the nuns, clergy, and other participants in the IRS system he investigated for his study on the TRC felt they could not express themselves before the Commission because they were expected to fulfil emotional scripts of contrition. Their own experiences, whether they “might be suffering guilt, nightmares, ‘flashbacks,’ or ‘triggers’ resulting from their experience”, did not fit the TRC’s script because “the concept of reconciliation simply does not extend that far” (154). For Niezen, the TRC is not a dialogic space, but a space that maintains divisions between victims and perpetrators, arguing that indignation, “lacks the explosiveness and temporariness of anger” (17), and that unlike anger, indignation “allow[s] for more reasonable communication and strategic action” (18). Indignation “allows people to think”, and “enables activism with a simultaneous emphasis on compassion and the common good” (Ibid.). Individuals branded as perpetrators, according to Niezen, did not feel the TRC allowed for a space to voice their own indignation.

My concern, however, is in regards to the testimony provided by Indigenous survivors and intergenerational survivors, and how negative emotions, including anger, are not, as Niezen posits, something less “reasonable” than indignation” (18). Glen Coulthard’s work (2014) is particularly illuminating here. He suggests that the language of reconciliation expects negative emotions to be overcome in the name of reconciling Indigenous and settler relations, an expectation, he argues, that is based on

“normative assumptions about the presumed ‘good’ of forgiveness and reconciliation” (108). He elaborates by outlining how there are:

[A] number of uncritical assumptions about the supposed ‘bad’ of harbouring reactive emotions like anger and resentment: that these feelings are physically and mentally unhealthy, irrational, retrograde, and, when collectively expressed, prone to producing increased social instability and political violence. (Ibid.)

In contrast to Niezen, for Coulthard, anger is productive. From an Indigenous-centred perspective, the emphasis is not on celebrating “the common good” (Niezen 18), but on resisting and destabilising the colonial present and the various prongs of the state’s colonial apparatus. According to the reconciliation discourse as advanced by the settler state, to reconcile is to be a ‘good citizen,’ to be publicly acknowledged as an “exalted subject” of the national collective and to belong to ‘the nation’ (Thobani 2007). Conversely, if one refuses to reconcile, one is unwilling to be part of the ‘the nation.’ For Coulthard resentment, “an angry and vigilant *unwillingness to forgive*”, constitutes a fight for justice:

[W]hat is treated in the Canadian discourse of reconciliation as an unhealthy and debilitating incapacity to forgive and move on is actually a sign of our *critical consciousness*, of our sense of justice and injustice, and our awareness of and unwillingness to *reconcile* ourselves with a structural and symbolic violence that is still very much present in our lives. (126; italics in original)

Resistance to belonging to the national imaginary as expressed through participation in the reconciliation project is apparent in the testimony provided

by attorney and activist Caleb Behn (Eh-Cho Dene and Dunne Za/Cree) in Vancouver, when he evoked one of the Commission's template questions: "What does reconciliation mean to you? How will we know when reconciliation has taken place?" (TRC, "Statement") Behn's testimony outlines his refusal to reconcile in the pursuit of truth and justice:

I cannot forgive nor will I countenance a notion of reconciliation and peace, when there is stolen water [*picks up bottled water*] on the table.

[...] I saw Kinder Morgan's name on the sponsorship list. I know Reconciliation Canada has support from both Kinder Morgan and TransCanada. And the violation of injustice perpetuated and thrust upon my family, and my people, and this country, and this nation, was predicated in part upon the taking of those resources and that land.

They didn't come just for the children. They came for oil, they came for the gas, they came for the coal, they came for trees, they come for the water. And so... [*cheers and applause*]... and so I could forgive, I think, if, if, the injustices ceased. That's my pledge. I can. But in the face of continuing injustice I cannot. And I will not. I refuse to. Never.

[...] As I acknowledge this, I hope that, there are some of you who will stand with me and deal with some of those injustices [*cheers and applause*].<sup>179</sup>

Behn was drawing attention to the state's ongoing accumulation of Indigenous lands and resources whilst at the same time non-Indigenous peoples played, and continue to play, the role of "bystander" (Carter 424n41). As bystanders, they (and us, settlers in the audience) are directly implicated in

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<sup>179</sup> TRC, National Event. Video recording on file with author. 21 September 2013. Vancouver, BC.

sustaining the colonial present. Behn's testimony did not amount to a refusal to reconcile in any circumstances; rather it was the prioritisation of the decolonisation of Canada, an instance of refusal to allow a process of national catharsis to subsume his story. Those watching online or physically present in the room could not slip into what Megan Boler articulates as "passive empathy", which induces pity but stops short of inspiring a desire for action and societal change (261). Passive empathy "enable[s] non-Indigenous peoples to feel good about feeling bad but engender[s] no critical awareness of themselves as colonial beneficiaries" (Regan *Unsettling* 47).

Behn's testimony was also an example of what Dominick LaCapra terms "empathetic unsettlement" (2001). According to LaCapra, this is a concept that entails "[b]eing responsive to the traumatic experience of others" (41) in such a way that "one puts oneself in the other's position while recognising the difference of that position and hence not taking the other's place" (78), whilst also recognising that "another's loss is not identical to one's own loss" (79).

By practicing empathetic unsettlement, settler Canadians can resist the temptation to appropriate Indigenous stories of suffering so as to confirm the humanitarian character of Canada, avoiding a process by which we feel bad, others see us feeling bad, and our benevolence is confirmed (Razack 2007). Roger Simon argues that for settlers, learning about the IRS is not just about understanding factual truths, but also "asking non-Aboriginal Canadians to work out where we 'fit in' to Aboriginal history, not just where Aboriginal history fits into the history of Canada" (136). Expanding on the work of Deborah Britzman, who writes that "learning from an event or experience is of

a different order, that of insight” (qtd. in Ibid.), Simon stresses “the importance of not only learning *about* the IRS system but the hard work of *learning from* this history” (Ibid.; italics in original). This is an approach that “can open a form of learning that impels us into a confrontation and ‘reckoning’ not only with stories of the past but also with ourselves as we *are* (historically, existentially, ethically) in the present” (136-137; italics in original).

Behn’s testimony demanded a response of social action and justice, of transforming settler society, and ultimately, of unsettling the colonial present. This was about not just IRS schools, but a much larger story about injustice perpetrated throughout Canada - a narrative that re-stories the story of the IRS system as told by Harper in his 2008 apology. His statement was a story that intervened in the present, what Jill Carter terms a “survivance-intervention” (2015). This is a phrase Carter composed through a reformulation of Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor’s concept of ‘survivance’ (2009), which he defines as “an active resistance and repudiation of dominance, obtrusive themes of tragedy, nihilism, and victimry” (88). This was a survivance-intervention because it spoke to the labour of justice; the labour of listening, the labour of material reparations, the labour involved in power-sharing, the labour that Canada must undergo if it is to unsettle its national myths that continue to shape how it stories itself. As Val Napoleon (Cree-Saulteaux-Dunne Zah heritage) summarises, echoing the words not only of Behn but also of many of the Indigenous scholars quoted throughout this study: “If reconciliation for Aboriginal people in Canada is ever going to move beyond rhetoric, reconciliation discussions must include substantive societal and

structural changes that deal with power imbalances, land, and resources” (176).

As Paulette Regan writes, these stories are “gifts” for settler Canadians - gifts to learn from, gifts to decolonise Canada, gifts that “requires us to risk being vulnerable, to question openly our accepted world views and cherished assumptions about our colonial history and identity” (*Unsettling* 190), gifts “that overturn our cultural identity as a nation of peacemakers”, because they “chronicle violence and dispossession that we do not want to hear, because they shake us to the core” (Ibid. 191). Behn’s testimony, along with thousands of others, was a gift that re-storied the story of Canada; telling a story in which Canada has never had an ‘Indian problem,’ but has always had, and continues to have, a settler problem (Epp 228).

This chapter has examined the politics of the TRC’s dramaturgy of acknowledgement, a dramaturgy that was set out to re-story the story of Canada through a national production of constructing a national memory of the IRS system. I began this chapter by situating the work of the TRC within the wider political project of the colonial present, tracing how this colonial present affected its larger work and efficacy. I then moved to an exploration of the staging of the national events and its programming, offering an analysis of the TRC’s healing mandate, and tracing the ways in which this mandate served as a script for the national events; specifically, how its therapeutic grammar shaped what kind of emotional repertoires were to be expected in the name of reconciliation. I investigated this question through an examination not only of the distributed printed material, but also of two symbolic practices: the Bentwood Box ritual and the gathering of ‘Tear Tissues.’ I then analysed how

this reconciliation habitus was destabilised through Caleb Behn's testimony, which disrupted the ideology of harmony underpinning the TRC's efforts. In doing so, I showed how individuals re-negotiated and challenged the reconciliation project, illustrating the fact that although the TRC was in many ways a scripted activity, this script could be, and was, publicly challenged.

I will continue this discussion, and conclude the dissertation, with an analysis of a Walk for Reconciliation, questioning what it means to re-story the story of Canada when the official story continues to be narrated in the colonial present tense.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Taking Steps: Decolonising the Story of Canada**

This dissertation had two major objectives. The first was to analyse the political workings of Canada's national narratives and to document the various ways in which 'the nation' stories itself has real material and structural effects, especially in regards to settler and Indigenous relations. In so doing, I have demonstrated the importance of interrogating Prime Minister Stephen Harper's comment at the G20 summit in 2009 that Canada has "no history of colonialism" (Harper qtd. in Wherry). I have explored how this remark exemplifies a deep multi-pronged political, legal, cultural, social, and economic state project in strategically undermining Indigenous sovereignty. This emerged, for example, through my analyses of state speeches, legal documents, monuments, national commemorations, and federal government advertising and branding projects.

Having identified official formulations of national identity, the second aim was to explore the performative ways Indigenous re-stories of Canada challenge and destabilise stories of settler benevolence, innocence, and redemption that deny the country's ongoing colonial histories; exploring this in various public sites: theatre, acts of protest, public testimonies, as well as everyday stories of Indigenous resiliency, resistance, and resurgence.

Throughout this investigation, I have identified how performance theory offers theoretical approaches for tracing how settler colonialism shapes stories of 'the nation'; but also, that a performance analytic opens up critical possibilities in intervening, and thus disrupting, the colonial present.

The purpose of Chapter 1 is to establish that attempts to preserve Canada's colonial present, through the deployment of narratives designed to



buttress the legitimacy of the settler state, are active and ongoing. I chose as my principal case study the bicentennial of the War of 1812, a key commemorative storying project of Stephen Harper's Conservative government.

The bicentennial provided a public platform for the government to practice settler amnesia through its 'new' story of Canada as a warrior nation. It also served a partisan political purpose: to replace the story, traditionally associated with the Liberal Party, of Canada as a global peacekeeper. The two stories are connected, however, in that they both seek to evade the state's responsibility for the colonial past and its colonial present, illustrating the fact that ongoing settler violence and injustices should be understood not as the preserve of any one political party, but as inherent to the settler state itself.

Chapter 1 also seeks to establish that although attempts to maintain illusions of settler benevolence are ongoing, so too are Indigenous attempts to disrupt these narratives. I focus on two such interventions in particular: Warren's public protest on Parliament Hill, and Herbie Barnes' play *Sovereign Alliances* (2012).

Whereas Warren's protest unsettled Canada's colonial cartography through the setting of Parliament Hill, Barnes' play re-storied the state's celebration of its territorial international border with the US. Like settler narratives of Canada as a 'warrior' or 'peacekeeping' nation, the two stories are united by a common purpose; taken together, all four case studies (the War of 1812 state-led commemorations, the peacekeeping narrative of 'the nation,' Warren's protest, and *Sovereign Alliances*) assist in the construction of a

framework for understanding ongoing settler-Indigenous narrative contestations that provide a frame of reference for the remainder of the study.

Shifting emphasis away from dominant narratives of the state and towards Indigenous performances of resistance, the purpose of Chapter 2 is to expose the fissures in narratives of national unity and equitable harmony between Indigenous and settler peoples as propagated in the War of 1812 bicentennial project. I chose as my case studies the Idle No More movement and Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike, describing the wider historical, political, and performative context that united the two.

Whereas Warren's one-man demonstration on Parliament Hill in July 2012 could be described as an act of 'micro' resistance, in that it was only a momentary intervention as a result of police officer surveillance, the Idle No More movement, founded a few months later, was a countrywide mass movement that received global attention. Whereas Barnes' act of narrative disruption was manifested through the medium of theatre and performed for one evening, Spence's act of resistance lasted for 44 days and was performed through her hunger-striking body and in view of a national public.

INM emanated from Indigenous opposition to proposed legislation that would abrogate settler treaty responsibilities to consult with Indigenous peoples about state and private acquisition and exploitation of Indigenous territories. That the legislation was enacted is instructive: the colonial present is sustained not just by the narratives of national stories, but also through federal law.

Spence's hunger strike, staged in a public act of conscious self-harm so as to protest the state's widespread indifference towards its own violation of

the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples, was met with widespread indifference from the federal government, and from some vocal quarters of the settler public; in this sense, her failure was her success. In refusing to die, her hunger strike exposed an expectation that she was not disappearing, or dying fast enough for the settler state (A. Simpson 2016). Her intervention performed the violence of not only the colonial past, but of the present, starkly calling the reconciliation project into question. Taken together, INM and Spence are united by their determination to expose the active amnesia that settlers perform not only during state pageantry, but in the everyday, in order to claim legitimacy, and settler sovereignty, over Indigenous lands.

If Chapter 1 is devoted principally to the state's ongoing claims to legitimacy, and Chapter 2 to performances of Indigenous resistance to those claims, the purpose of Chapter 3 is to analyse a forum in which the two are ostensibly 'reconciled': the TRC of Canada.

I do so through an examination of the TRC's politics of acknowledgement, specifically the affective and political dramaturgy of the TRC's healing mandate. I examine how the Commission's therapeutic grammar shaped what kind of emotional repertoires were to be expected in the name of reconciliation, giving special attention to the Commission's rituals, evident in two symbolic practices: the Bentwood Box ritual and the gathering of 'Tear Tissues.'

Some Indigenous survivors of Canada's residential schools and their families refused to allow Canada to engage in a national catharsis without first addressing its colonial present, illustrating the fact that although the TRC was in many ways a scripted activity, this script could be, and was, publicly

challenged. It is in this context that I give special attention to the testimony of Caleb Behn, who disrupted the ideology of harmony underpinning the TRC's efforts. By insisting upon concrete steps to decolonise the present before reconciliation can be achieved, Behn challenged the notion that by making fleeting expressions of guilt, settler Canadians can not only achieve exculpation of that same guilt, but also be freed from their responsibility to re-story their past/present.

Each chapter devotes extensive analysis to at least one Indigenous voice of re-storying. In Chapter 1, Warren draws our attention to the theft and exploitation of unceded land by the state, even as the representatives of the state perform rituals of settler innocence on that same land. In Chapter 2, Spence embodied a performance of Indigenous resistance, illustrating how Canada's existing legal order justifies and sustains colonial violence. In Chapter 3, Behn's refusal to allow an unhappy story to be eclipsed by a fairy-tale ending forces settler Canadians to consider uncomfortable questions about how true reconciliation might ever be achieved.

If each voice represents a chapter, each chapter represents a pillar upon which this dissertation has been constructed. Like pillars, the voices of Warren, Chief Theresa Spence, and Caleb Behn can either be viewed as standing independently of one another, or as bearing a collective burden as part of the same structure; they speak and act as individuals, but they are united by a shared determination to re-story Canada's colonial present.

The same principle applies to the three major performance events described over the course of this study. The War of 1812 bicentennial, INM and the TRC can legitimately be seen as mutually exclusive. The argument

threaded through this dissertation, however, is that all three can - and should - be regarded as part of a wider series of narrative contestations that will determine the future of all of the inhabitants of the land now known as 'Canada.'

My introduction began with my visit to an archive that traced the present to the past; I end with my observations from a public event that traced the past back towards to the present, bringing together the various threads from which this study has been composed. At the heart of this last story is my encounter with an Indigenous woman, whose words and actions during a so-called 'Walk for Reconciliation' raised a question fitting for a conclusion: How does one conclude a story that isn't over?

Her intervention illustrates how reconciliation as "a kind of chant or chorus" or "an anthem to Canadian identity and ideals" (K. Martin 52) performs as a replication of narratives of settler national innocence; it is not a re-writing of the national story.

### **Walking for Reconciliation**

On 22 September 2013, the day after the TRC concluded its four-day national event in British Columbia, I participated in a 'Walk for Reconciliation' in downtown Vancouver organised by Reconciliation Canada - an Indigenous-led non-profit founded in 2012 by Karen Joseph, the daughter of Gwawaenuk Elder and residential school survivor Chief Robert Joseph (former Executive Director of the TRC IRS Survivor Committee), in order "to

uphold a dream held by her father to witness thousands of people walking together for renewed relationship” (Reconciliation Canada, “Team”).<sup>180</sup>

It was a Sunday morning, and I had arrived several minutes before the opening ceremonies in the hope that I could find a good position from which to observe the proceedings. Still a couple of blocks away from the main stage on Queen Elizabeth Plaza, I switched on my voice recorder to capture the sounds of the Sweet Soul Gospel Choir singing “Stand by Me” to the participants gathering for the four kilometre walk.<sup>181</sup> Amplified by speakers, the voices of the choir echoed and spilled onto the surrounding streets. The music engendered an atmosphere of celebration and joy visible on the faces of people around me, some of whom swayed their bodies and clapped their hands in rhythm to the song.

As heavy rain began to fall, I sheltered in the doorway of a nearby coffee shop along with a number of other participants. Some were wearing t-shirts with the TRC’s logo emblazoned on the front; bought on sale at a recent gathering of the Commission, another wore a shirt that read, “Residential School Survivor: They Did Not Kill the ‘Indian’ in Me.”

The rain subsided, and we parted ways and returned to the crowd. Ahead of me was a sea of people, umbrellas, and banners. One banner towering above my head exclaimed, “OUR SECURITY LIES IN OUR FIGHT FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL”; others stated, “JAPANESE STAND WITH YOU,” “JAPANESE CANADIANS 4 REVOLUTION,”<sup>182</sup> “WE ARE

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<sup>180</sup> There have been Reconciliation Walks in other settler states, notably Australia; see Edmonds (2016).

<sup>181</sup> For those less able to complete four kilometres on foot, a shortened route of two kilometres was also available.

<sup>182</sup> During World War II, specifically the years 1942 to 1945, 23,000 Japanese Canadians were declared ‘enemy aliens’ and had their possessions confiscated, property seized, and their

WITNESSING.” Dozens of signs bore the names of local churches and images of religious icons; I came across one individual with a bright yellow sash with the words “RECONCILIATION MATTERS” written across it.

As the downpour resumed, I joined a group of people huddled in a small leaky tent near the side of the stage originally erected for the event’s volunteers. For the next hour, a reported 70,000 people stood listening to the organisers of the walk and its supporters, which included the Commissioners of the TRC, share their vision for “a new way forward” between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada (TRC, BC National Event Program 18).

The opening ceremonies of the Reconciliation Walk featured a keynote address by Baptist minister, activist, and lawyer Dr Bernice King, the youngest child of the late African-American civil rights movement leader Martin Luther King Jr. She began her speech by addressing the core value of Reconciliation Canada, *namwayut*, a word from the Kwak’wala language that translates as ‘we are all one.’<sup>183</sup> Dr King urged the crowd to embrace the principle of *namwayut*, explaining that it leads to collective solidarity in the fight for the freedom and dignity of oppressed communities. King argued that

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rights and Canadian citizenship removed. Thousands were sent to internment camps in the interior of British Columbia, or Prisoner of War camps, or forced into manual labour. In 1949, Japanese Canadians regained the freedom to live and move anywhere within Canada. The federal government offered a formal apology only in 1988, signing the Redress Agreement. The settlement set a legal precedent for others in Canada seeking reparations for historic harms. This includes the IRSSA. Indigenous and Japanese communities in Canada have often demonstrated solidarity with one another in their struggles for redress.

<sup>183</sup> There are similarities between *namwayut* and the philosophy of *ubuntu* that buttressed the work of South Africa’s TRC. Yvette Hutchison explains that the latter “is a concept founded on the notion of common humanism”, which “aligned with the Christian message of forgiveness at the Commission” (47). *Namwayut* was not officially adopted by Canada’s TRC; unlike *ubuntu*, it is not used to explicitly link Christian theology with the process of reconciliation and indigenous world views. Kwak’wala is an endangered language, with approximately 50 living fluent speakers, one of whom is Robert Joseph. It is the mother tongue of the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations, who are the original inhabitants of Northern Vancouver Island, and adjacent parts of mainland BC.

the work of the TRC is a vital step towards reconciliation, as “it allow[s] individuals to cleanse and clear their consciences, their hearts, of the pain and the suffering and the residue that has come from years of abuse.”<sup>184</sup>

Weaving in biblical metaphors and scriptures and quoting lines from her father’s speeches, King referenced the legacies of slavery and the Jim Crow laws in America, stating that non-violence in the struggle for societal change must be the way forward for Canada. Her call for justice evoked the performance register of a religio-political sermon, and connected with the crowd. My voice recorder picked up repeated waves of cheers, whistling, applause, and the beating of drums.

After King’s speech, someone on stage asked the crowd: “Are you ready to walk?”<sup>185</sup> Next was a ceremony performed by members of the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations and neighbouring Indigenous nations of “a modern expression of gilskamlił” (Reconciliation Canada, “Walk”). According to Reconciliation Canada, this is “a ceremony performed during the potlatch by the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations”; and that “Gilskamlił is not a dance, but a poetic expression” (Ibid.). It was performed with the intention “to lift all people” (Ibid.) before the walk commenced.

Once the ceremony had finished, the crowd started making their way along the Georgia Viaduct and towards Creekside Park. I wrote the following in my notebook: *What will reaching the final destination perform? Will it mean that once at Creekside Park, we (the participants and thus Canada) have arrived at reconciliation?*

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<sup>184</sup> Walk for Reconciliation. Audio recording from the author. 22 Sep. 2013. Vancouver, BC.

<sup>185</sup> (Ibid.)



Theatre and performance scholar Jill Dolan suggests that this Walk for Reconciliation be understood in terms of “utopian performatives” - “small but profound moments [...] that lift everyone slightly above the present, into a hopeful feeling of what the world might be like” (5). Like a theatre space, the walk provided a setting for “audiences [to] feel themselves allied with each other, and with a broader, more capacious sense of a public, in which social discourse articulates the possible, rather than the insurmountable obstacles to human potential” (Ibid. 2); a physical demonstration of solidarity in an action in which all can participate in a public space.

There are many obstacles facing those engaged in these hopeful practices that seek to move Canada towards reconciliation, however. In her remarks, Dr King had suggested that reconciliation matters because of our common humanity.<sup>186</sup> But for many Indigenous activists and scholars, this “friendly” and “non-agonistic” vision of the future between settlers and Indigenous peoples (Robinson, “Feeling” 304) is deeply problematic, as it leaves little space for the unsettling of the “present-day operation” of Canada’s “colonial machinery” (Chrisjohn and Yong 250). Instead of challenging the colonial present, the Walk for Reconciliation provided an opportunity to celebrate and “enjoy [the] *beautiful radiant things*” (Thompson 6) that reconciliation ostensibly brings: positive feelings, a sense of community, and

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<sup>186</sup> Dr King’s numerous mentions of God and Biblical references were delivered to a crowd that included hundreds of residential school survivors. Many of whom had just provided testimony to the Commission about the horrific abuse they experienced at the hands of members of religious orders and administering institutions founded with the explicit purpose of converting Indigenous ‘heathens’ to the Christian Gospel (TRC, *Honouring* 272). Many survivors continue to practice Christianity, however. Reports suggest that as of 2016, two-thirds of the Indigenous population in Canada identify as Christian (Todd); although this number may not be entirely reliable (see Fleischmann and Styvendale xi). This complex history has been explored by Taiaiake Alfred (1999; 2005), who argues that reconciliation cannot be parsed from the Judeo-Christian beliefs that underpin it, making it inherently problematic for Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood (2005).

an affective connection of unity with others. What the settlers in the crowd, such as myself, were not being asked to think about was: “Whose traditional land are you on? And what does that question mean?” (Haig-Brown and Nock 4) As I walked alongside thousands of others, I wondered if I was walking into an over-optimistic “fantasy” of reconciliation (Tuck and Yang 35).

Once we reached Creekside Park, I encountered someone in the crowd holding a sign. Leona Brown explained to me that she was at the Walk for Reconciliation both to support residential school survivors, including her late mother, and as a supporter of the Idle No More movement. On one side her sign read, “You Will Not Amend Me From Existence”; on the other, “Aboriginal, NOT Invisible.”

Introducing herself as an intergenerational residential school survivor, Brown expressed her anger that the recent TRC event was sponsored by the American energy giant Kinder Morgan, which is hoping to triple the capacity of its existing 1,150 kilometre Trans Mountain pipeline by building a parallel line between Edmonton in Alberta to Burnaby in BC.<sup>187</sup> Arguing that the project would violate Indigenous treaty rights as the pipeline cuts across their communities, Indigenous activists have been protesting against Kinder Morgan since the announcement of its proposal in 2012.<sup>188</sup> It was within this

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<sup>187</sup> The extension would boost the pumping of refined petroleum and crude oil from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels per day, which would then be sent to a storage facility and transported to offshore markets. Were the project to be approved by Canada’s National Energy Board, tanker traffic in Burrard Inlet, BC is expected to increase seven-fold (*Vancouver Observer*, “Kinder”). A potential leak would be “catastrophic” and “impossible to mitigate” (Smith qtd. in McSheffrey). Expert reports have argued that “a spill could expose up to a million people to toxic benzene fumes and kill up to 100,000 birds”, cause “irreversible health effects” (Kane), and far-reaching ecological damage that could “obliterate or permanently alter precious marine ecosystems” (McSheffrey).

<sup>188</sup> According to representatives of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, “[s]ince the 1960s, the longest period of time the Trans Mountain Pipeline has gone without a spill is approximately four years” (Sacred Trust). In 2015, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation launched a lawsuit against the

context that Leona Brown shared the following thoughts with me:

*AM: Could you introduce yourself, and what your sign means?*

LB: My name is Leona Brown. I am Gitxsan First Nation. [...] I'm here to support the survivors. And this protest is mostly because, the government is trying to take away our rights as First Nations to protect this land, and even more to protest. Because I found out during this event that it was sponsored by Kinder Morgan as well.<sup>189</sup> [...] For something that is supposed to be Aboriginal, and these people have taken money from something that we are fighting against. To me, this, them taking money from an oil company or gas company is just a huge slap in the face. [...] This is why I'm here. To further have Idle No More noticed. That it's not just about one thing. All of this is intertwined with everything about Idle No More. And even if I stand alone to get noticed I will. Because people should know. To look beyond this big show and to read between the lines.

*AM: Do you see the walk and the TRC as a show?*

LB: I don't see all of it as a show. I see it as a distraction perhaps. [...] When government officials are involved, why do you want us to heal from something when eventually you're going to allow this bill to pass through

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National Energy Board, arguing that the Harper government had failed in its constitutional duty to consult Indigenous peoples.

<sup>189</sup> Although Brown mentions Kinder Morgan as a sponsor of the Walk for Reconciliation, it is another energy company, TransCanada, that is listed as sponsoring the Walk for Reconciliation in the TRC's BC National Event Program (18). As mentioned in Chapter 2, TransCanada's proposed Keystone XL pipeline was rejected by US President Barack Obama in 2015. During the TRC event in Vancouver, however, I heard a number of Indigenous individuals remark that Kinder Morgan was sponsoring the walk. I contacted Reconciliation Canada for clarification, but did not receive a response.

where we don't exist as a people? [...]<sup>190</sup>

*AM: Have there been a lot protests at the TRC?*

LB: There hasn't been, because we wanted to respect [...] what the Elders had to say there. We're not there to interfere. We're there to listen. [...]

*AM: What about non-Indigenous people, what do you think about them being present here and as a part of the process? Has it been from a place of honesty?*

LB: I think so. [...] I've seen many of them at the events [...]. There were a lot of eyes that have been opened and a lot of ears that were unplugged.

*AM: What do you think of the words 'truth' and 'reconciliation'?*

LB: I think they're very good words. I think I'm taking them with a different context, I think then what they [the TRC] are doing. They're focused on the residential schools, which is good. But I'm here to say it's not just residential schools. This is about more than that. Truth and reconciliation, if we're going to go down that road as a journey as a whole, then let's look at everything, let's look at the whole picture. Including the amendments that are being made, and our lands being taken away, for this pipeline to go through, it all comes together.

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<sup>190</sup> It is unclear whether Brown was referring to Bill C-45, which was discussed in Chapter 2, or the Kinder Morgan project more specifically.

*AM: Did you give testimony at the TRC?*

LB: [...] I didn't think it was my place to do one. Only because I didn't know very much of what my mother went through. All I know is how she raised me, which wasn't good. But now I understand why.<sup>191</sup>

As I transcribed my video recording of this conversation, a marked dissonance emerged between what Brown was describing, and what was being said on stage at Creekside Park by Reconciliation Canada and their partners as they brought the event to a close. The words “building bridges”; “we stood in hope”; “we took action”; “we are all one”; “reconciliation can bring all people together”; “our hearts as one”; and “as we move forward,” interrupt and occasionally drown out Brown's voice. Looking through my photographs, I notice that as most of the participants of the walk gradually dispersed as they left the park, Brown remains stationary - holding her sign high in the air as the rain pours down and soaks her clothes.

This image of Brown remaining stationary as the other participants walked away gave me reason to pause and consider the ways in which practices of walking and standing still operate as modes of performance. Brown's protest serves as an invitation to query the trope of ‘moving forward,’ so often embedded in discourses of reconciliation in general, and in this case within the Canadian context. We have seen it before in this study, in the context of my discussion of Stephen Harper's 2008 apology for the IRS system, when he announced the work of the TRC as symbolising Canada's “desire to move forward” (Government of Canada, “House”). Throughout the

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<sup>191</sup> Walk for Reconciliation. Video recording from the author. 22 Sep. 2013. Vancouver, BC.

institutional life of the Commission, the concept circulated both in its production as a live national event, as well as in the form of its mandate, which opens with: “*There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future*” (TRC, “Schedule”; italics in original). Variations on the theme also appear numerous times in the Commission’s published findings, whether it be “going forward” (*Honouring* 6), “steps forward” (Ibid. 8), or “way forward” (Ibid. 253).

The importance of finding “a new way forward” (TRC, BC National Event Program 18) was also reinforced as a message during the Walk for Reconciliation in Vancouver in 2013, not only through its publicity material, but also during the event itself, brought up by various speakers. It would be reaffirmed by the crowd, and by our corporeal bodies, as we moved forward together, step by step, across the twinned bridge of the Georgia Viaduct and towards Creekside Park.

As David Gaertner observes, in scholarship theorising reconciliation the concept of ‘moving forward’ is often described using the metaphor of the bridge, as “[i]t captures the notion of connection that reconciliation founds itself on: the idea that society can construct a means to unite two previously isolated masses” (49). He quotes John Hatch, a scholar specialising on racial reconciliation, who writes that “reconciliation is potentially the construction of a bridge” (50). Gaertner also cites the work of comparative race studies scholar Anne Anlin Cheng, who understands reconciliation as “*the attempt to walk (and live) on the rickety bridge between the self and other*” (qtd. in Ibid.; italics in original).

It is important to consider here how reconciliation as the “building of bridges” - as described by one of the speakers at the walk in Vancouver - belies the asymmetrical relations of power in Canada between the state and Indigenous peoples. This asymmetry is starkly apparent in the genocidal violence perpetrated through the residential school system, as well as in the manifold injustices that continue to take place against Indigenous peoples.

This study argues that if settlers are to commit themselves to the national project of reconciliation, we must go much further than simply celebrate ‘oneness,’ as urged by King and others at the Walk for Reconciliation. It is vital that Canadians acknowledge how structural inequalities, forged over hundreds of years of colonialism, continue to shape the everyday existence of Indigenous peoples; something which the colonial present tense actively works to mask.

This bears repeating if we are to consider what reconciliation means, why it matters, and to whom. Indigenous peoples have significantly lower living standards, a lower level of household income, lower levels of high school completion rates, higher levels of chronic health problems, and shorter life expectancy than Canadian society as a whole. They are over-represented in Canada’s criminal justice system, there are considerably higher rates of homicide against Indigenous women, and the rate of Indigenous children in the welfare system today is three times higher than during the operation of the residential school system (Sinclair).<sup>192</sup> Narrations of oneness and the “good

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<sup>192</sup> In 2007, Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations and Family Caring Society, together with the AFN, filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission against Ottawa in 2007. They argued that the Government of Canada discriminates against Indigenous children on reserves, by failing to provide the same level of child welfare services as it does to other children; and that as a result of this low funding more Indigenous children end up in the child welfare system. In 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled in their favour.

feeling” (Ahmed 2008) such celebrations engender, I suggest, risk operating as a regression into sameness of identities, memories, and histories between settlers and Indigenous peoples, reinforcing the colonial project (see Robinson 2014).

This is not to dismiss the efficacy of the Walk for Reconciliation, nor to question the motives of the organisers and participants. The joy of participating in a communal event with thousands of others from multiple faiths, backgrounds, and ages, coming together in solidarity, and the importance of witnessing Indigenous ceremony, of hearing settlers and Indigenous peoples say the word *namwayut*, of seeing Indigenous peoples proudly wear their regalia, reflected an important celebration of Indigenous survival and resurgence after the IRS system sought to destroy Indigenous languages, cultural traditions, and Indigenous life.

When settlers participate in such exercises and public performances of reconciliation, however, we should ask ourselves the following questions: What is it that we are being moved by when we move together? And what is that we are moving past when we speak about, or enact the symbolisation of, ‘moving forward?’

These questions remain salient to this day. In June 2015, when Harper was still Prime Minister with a federal election looming that October, the TRC released its 94 “Calls to Action.” They were divided into two main parts: “The legacy” (1 to 42) and “The challenge of reconciliation” (43 to 94). After years of inaction and apparent lack of interest in Indigenous issues and the TRC, Harper’s 2008 apology had long started to ring hollow. The Liberal Party, in contrast, announced that it “accepts and commits to implement these



recommendations” (qtd. in *APTN* “PM”). This was a key element of its campaign pitch, helping the Party to win the election. Trudeau campaigned on the promise to restore relations with Indigenous peoples, as well as a promise to renew Canada’s contribution to UN peacekeeping missions; in essence, to restore the Liberal Party’s own mythology to the heart of the story of Canada. Upon assuming office, Trudeau worked to restore the images of Canada that the Harper government had sought to dismantle, including the paintings of Alfred Pellán that Harper had replaced with an image of Queen Elizabeth II (K. Harris).

In December 2015, after three months in office, Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivered a widely-publicised speech to the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Quebec, in which he declared:

What is needed is nothing less than a total renewal of the relationship between Canada and the First Nations peoples. (Government of Canada, “Assembly”)

Many Canadians were excited by this break from the past. It appeared to herald a new era of reconciliation, illustrated by language that Harper had never used.

Whilst the formal scope of this study ends with Harper’s defeat in 2015, it is worth briefly mentioning the Trudeau administration’s response to three recommendations made in the TRC’s *Final Report*, so as to illustrate the point, made above, that Canada’s ongoing colonial injustices should not be understood as the preserve of any one political party.

Call 43 stated: “We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation” (*Honouring* 244). Despite the Liberal Party’s declaration, both before the election and in the first months of the Trudeau administration, of its intention to implement the Declaration in full, in July 2016 Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould announced that it would not be incorporated into Canadian law, describing it as “unworkable” and a “political distraction” in protecting Indigenous rights (*APTN*, “Justice”).

As outlined in Chapter 2, for decades Indigenous communities have fought for the establishment of a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women. The TRC supported this in its 42<sup>nd</sup> “Call to Action”:

We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls. (*Honouring* 227)

Within months of coming into power, the Liberals announced that it would be launched, ostensibly fulfilling a key component of the 13-point Declaration of Commitment that ended Spence’s hunger strike in 2013.

In October 2016, however, President Francyne Joe of the Native Women’s Association of Canada published a statement expressing “disappointment and frustration with the lack of substantial progress” of the inquiry, adding that the two-year mandate was not enough time for the body to listen to “family members, loved ones, and survivors express their stories all across Canada” (Native Women’s Association).

The inquiry has already faced extensive criticism regarding lack of accountability, as it “is not expected to have a mandate to make findings of

police misconduct or compel law-enforcement agencies to re-open cold cases” (Baum and Galloway). In short, the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women threatens to mirror the potential failings of the TRC, the body that recommended it, with gestures of reconciliation that are not followed by structural change.

The same principle applies in relation to the hydro-electric Site C dam in BC, the building of which, Indigenous activists argue, is irreconcilable with Liberal promises as it is a violation of Indigenous treaty rights. Amnesty International argues that the “dam would ‘severely undermine’ use of the land, would make fishing unsafe for at least a generation, and would submerge burial grounds and other crucial cultural and historical sites.”

Indigenous activist and intergenerational survivor Caleb Behn, referenced in Chapter 3 regarding his testimony to the Commission in Vancouver, argues that the Liberal government does not symbolise a break from the colonial present. In a recorded message to the *CBC* in August 2016, he stated:

Canadians should recognise that, it looks like the Liberal government is breaking the promises they made on the election trail, the campaign trail, in the same way this country has broken the promises to First Nations in treaty. I hope listeners understand that reconciliation, true reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, is not for cowards. It is hard, hard work. (The Current)

In her protest during the Walk for Reconciliation, Leona Brown was questioning precisely these impulses of ‘putting the past behind us’ and of

‘moving forward.’ The work of performance scholar Deirdre Heddon is instructive here:

Walking, the literal contact of body with environment, supposedly provides a privileged mode of knowledge. But what about the potential art or aesthetic of standing still, a philosophy or phenomenology of being stationary? What if, rather than walking through place, one stops in place? (“One” 168)

Heddon suggests that standing still is an action, that it “is purposeful lingering, good lingering”, it “is to have arrived” (Ibid.). Brown’s agitation of reconciliation enacts this. Her public intervention was about making settler-Canadians realise that they need to stop ‘moving forward’ and pre-emptively declaring reconciliation without addressing and repairing the colonial injustices of the past and present.

We may have taken important steps during the Walk for Reconciliation, but more steps lie ahead of us. Settlers need collectively to turn the gaze back onto themselves. INM, Spence’s protest, and the TRC are only three examples of highly visible public events that called attention to Canada as not only complicit, but also directly benefiting from the dispossession of Indigenous peoples not from ‘our land,’ but from *their* lands.

This call finds particular urgency as I write the final words of this doctoral project, as in 2017 the federal government will lead celebrations of 150 years since Confederation in 1867. 2017 also marks the 141<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Indian Act, through which the IRS system was enforced. When, in 2017, we tell and retell Canada’s national story, it is imperative that neither the residential schools, nor the colonial structures and attitudes that

underpinned them, are omitted. Their inclusion requires that we continue to unsettle what remains an unsettled past. We need to decolonise the spaces in which we live, our laws, our histories, as well as our stories of national identity. To fail to decolonise the story of Canada would be to condemn its future to the colonial present. It is my hope that this study contributes to the fields of theatre and nation, performance, memory, and settler colonial studies in not only thinking through, to paraphrase the words of my interlocutor Leona Brown, how the colonial past and present shapes the 'whole picture' of Canada, but in bringing into being alternative, more just imaginings of the land now called 'Canada.'

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